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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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* Regular exchanges with publications in the related fields will be welcome.

EDITORIAL

The second issue of the *Bangladesh Lalit Kalā* is being offered with usual quality of production. Contributors have been drawn from home and abroad, as before. The Editor is indeed grateful to those who, on receiving the first issue of this journal, sent words of appreciation and encouragement. It is realised that without such inspiration and a spirit of sustained co-operation from all concerned it may not be possible to publish a standard journal devoted to the art heritage of Bangladesh.

The First International Congress on Bengal Art has now been re-scheduled to be held at Dacca on March 6-9, 1976. An amended announcement can be seen elsewhere in this issue. It is proposed that the next two issues, i. e., nos. 1 & 2 of vol. 2 (1976), of the *Bangladesh Lalit Kalā* would be brought out as a combined issue to cover completely the proceedings of the Congress and would be out by the end of that year. This would be followed by normal half-yearly journal with effect from issue no. 1 of vol. 3.

CORRIGENDUM

On p. 89 paragraph 2, please read 'Plate XXIX' in place of 'Plate I'.

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Plate XXXVII, fig. 2 to *Bulletin of the School of Oriental & African Studies*, University of London, vol. XI ; Plate XLI, fig. 9 to Directorate of Archaeology, West Bengal ; and Plate XLVI, fig. 1 to Susan L. Huntington.

AN UNPUBLISHED INSCRIPTION FROM SITALMAT

A. B. M. HABIBULLAH

This inscribed slab, recently acquired by the Dacca Museum (Acc. no. 68.89) from village Sitalmat, in the Naogaon sub-division of Rajshahi district, was found lying on the ground in an uncultivated tract of land. No ruin of any recognizable structure was seen, although old bricks and broken pieces of dressed stone were lying around. The ground is flat and the nearest village is about two miles away.

The rectangular slab, measuring 3'-9½" by 11½", is of dressed black basalt and is intact but for a slight damage on the right hand side where the edge appears to have flaked off (Plate I, fig. 1). Initial letters and words of the lines are, as a result, unreadable. The slab was apparently used in an earlier Hindu structure, possibly as a door jamb, as is proved by the existence on the back of a rectangular design containing rosettes enclosed by a beaded-chain motif carved in low relief on a sunken polished surface (Plate I, fig. 2). Part of the inscribed surface is left blank in the original dressing and the letters are carved in low relief without any enclosing line. Long exposure to the elements has damaged the lettering, at places the letters are broken off, and some words have to be restored conjecturally.

The inscription consisting of four lines records the erection of a sacred structure dedicated to devotional use of pious and devout men constantly engaged in prayers and the reading of the sacred scriptures day and night, on the orders of the just, exalted Khān, Abūl Faṭḥ Yūzbak al-Sulṭānī, and endowed by Aḥmad bin Mas'ūd in the month of Ramaḍān, 652 A. H.

- I [بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم امر ببناء هذا العمارة المباركة للمتقين المحبين القرآن ...
والصالحين والابرار والذاكرين بالليل والنهار ... و [المتطهرين]]
- II خان العادل [جليل القدر] باذل الكامل في [سبيل الله] مغيث الاسلام والمسلمين ابي
الفتح يوذبك السلطاني ناصر امير المؤمنين خلد الله سلطنه]
- III [المخير] .. احمد بن مسعود [المواقفي] الحسين الملة [الله] وصي عنه وعن والديه
وشرط النظر فيها لنفسه مدة كيلا ولمن رضى عليه فمن بدله بعد ما سمعه قائما ائمه]
- IV على الذين يبدلونه ان الله سميع عليم اين نصيحات نقشه [كنده] بادر نصب شده
اند لعنت برانكس باد كه اين قاعده را متغير گرداند و خلل كند تاريخ شهر رمضان
سنة اثنين وخمسين و ستمائة]

Translation :

- I. In the name of Allah, merciful and compassionate. The construction of this sacred building for the (use of) the pious and the devout, lovers of the Quran, upright, truthful men and reciters of (God's name) day and night and of the purified , was ordered by
- II. the just and exalted Khān, generous perfect in (spending in) the way of Allah, helper of Islam and of the Muslims, Abūl Faṭḥ Yūzbak al-Sulṭānī, helper of the Commander of the Faithful, may God perpetuate his authority.
- III. of his own free will Aḥmad bin Mas'ūd, by way of a Covenant with the good (man) among Allah's people left a bequest from him and from his parents, and is conditional on supervision and inspection, because his life is for a measured period, to him who accepts (this condition) "and whosoever changes the condition after he has heard it then its sin
- IV. Will be on those who change it, and verily, God is all-hearing and all-knowing."¹ These admonitions engraved (on stone) have been fixed on the door. Curse be on him who alters the foundation of this structure and damages (it). Dated in the month of Ramaḍān, year six hundred and fifty two.

The inscription is of more than ordinary interest. Apart from its being the second earliest Muslim epigraph so far discovered in Bengal — the earliest being that of Jalāl al-Dīn Mas'ūd Jānī dated in 647 A. H. found in Gangarampur, Dinajpur district — it supplies an important link in the chain of clues for the reconstruction of the political history of Bengal during the years following the removal of Tughril Tughan Khān from the *Muqti*-ship in 642 A. H. and his replacement by Tamur Khān, the governor of Awadh. The latter died at his post in 644 A. H. Reference to the political situation in Bengal subsequent to this event is rather obscure in the literary histories which has consequently to be inferred largely from epigraphic and numismatic evidences as are available. Together with the present inscription these evidences are :

i) The Gangarampur inscription mentioned above mentioning Jalāl al-Dīn Mas'ūd Shāh Jānī as the viceroy (walī), with high-sounding titles like "Mālik Mulūk al-Sharq" during the reign of Sulṭān Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd, and dated in 647 A. H.²

ii) A silver *tankah* issued in Lakhnauti in the name of Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd followed by a word which Nelson Wright³ doubtfully read as Yūzbak but which in the drawing given by Thomas is clearly readable as "al-'Abd Yūzbak al-Sulṭānī".⁴ The coin has a

1. *Qurān*, ch. II, 181.

2. *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1913-14, pp. 19-22 ; Shamsuddin Ahmed, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, vol. IV, Rajshahi, 1960, p. 7.

3. H. N. Wright, *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta*, vol. II, Oxford, 1907 (henceforth *CCIM*), no. 140.

4. Edward Thomas, *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, London, 1871, p. 129, no. 110.

date in the margin whose unit word Nelson Wright could not read but which cannot in any case be anterior to 650 A. H. ; for reasons to be seen presently, the unit word could not be other than one 'or two' (اثنین or احدى) that is, 651 or 652 A. H.

iii) The present inscription which is clearly dated in 652 A. H. and makes no mention of the reigning Sulṭān of Delhi (Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd) but records the erection of the building on the orders of Yūzbak al-Sulṭānī, using very high titles for himself as *Khān al-'Adil al-Kāmil al-Bāzil, Muḡhiṭh al-Islām wal-Muslimin, Abūl Faṭḥ Nāṣir Amīrul Mu'minin*.

iv) A silver coin issued from Lakhnauti and clearly dated in Ramaḍān, 653 A. H. in the name of Sulṭān al-'Aẓam, Muḡhiṭh al-Duniya wal-Dīn Abūl Muẓaffar Yūzbak al-Sulṭān, in the time of the Imam al-Musta'shim, the Amīrul Mu'minin. On the margin it mentions specially that it was struck from the "*kharāj* of 'Arzbadan' (or Umardan) and Nadiya".⁵

v) A silver coin issued from Lakhnauti in the name of Sulṭān Nāṣir al-Dīn Abūl Muẓaffar Maḥmūd bin al-Sulṭān, in the time of the Imām al-Musta'shim, the Amīrul Mu'minin and dated clearly in 655 A. H., and making no mention of Yūzbak.⁶

vi) The Baradari, Bihar, inscription of Tatar *Khān*, dated in 665 A. H. recording the erection of a mausoleum for a person named therein as Sulṭān *Shāh* who died in 663 A. H.⁷

As mentioned above supplementing and providing interpretative evidence for the facts suggested by these epigraphic and numismatic records are the occasional references in the contemporary chronicles of the *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣiri* of Minhāj-i-Sirāj. These references were summarised by Blochmann in his *Contributions*.⁸ But some new evidences were not known to him and he misread the text in one case. An outline of the political history of Bengal during the years under review can now be drawn more firmly than before.

Following Tamur *Khān*'s death in *Shawwāl*, 644 A. H., only ten months after the deposition of the Delhi Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn Mas'ūd, Lakhnauti appears to have been practically left to its fate, for no governor is mentioned as having been appointed to succeed Tamur *Khān*, or perhaps political uncertainty in the capital did not permit immediate attention to the affairs of the eastern province. Who wielded actual power in Lakhnauti is not known. At any rate, the next governor, ruling in the name of the Delhi Sulṭān Mas'ūd *Shāh Jānī* (Jalāl al-Dīn Kulij *Khān* Mas'ūd *Shāh Jānī*, son of 'Alā' al-Dīn *Jānī*, *Shāhzādah* of Turkistan)⁹ is known to us only from the single inscription at Gangarampur (no. i above).

5. H. N. Wright, *CCIM*, vol. II, p. 146, no. 61.

6. *Ibid.*, no. 138 ; H. N. Wright, *Sultans of Delhi, their Coinage and Metrology*, Delhi, 1936, p. 55, no. 225c.

7. Qeyamuddin Ahmad, *Corpus of Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bihar*, Patna, 1973, pp. 6-9.

8. Blochmann, *Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1968, pp. 39-40.

9. *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣiri*, Eng. tr. by H. G. Raverty, Bibliotheca Indica, 1881, vol. I, p. 673, also p. 626.

As a matter of fact, his governorship of Lakhnauti about this time is not mentioned in the Chronicles at all. Even Mālik Yūzbak (*Iḳhtiyār al-Dīn Yūzbak-i-Tughril Khān*, to give him the full name as mentioned in *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣiri*) who is mentioned as having been entrusted with the territory of Lakhnauti, previously held in succession the following assignments since the accession of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn Mas'ūd in 639 A. H. : Tabarhindah, Lahore, Kanouj (obviously after prince Jalāl al-Dīn Mas'ūd was transferred from there in 646 A.H.), and Awadh.¹⁰ The only certain fact of Yūzbak's ruling over Lakhnauti is the *tankah* (no. ii above) issued in the name of Sulṭān Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd to whom he shows his loyalty by naming himself only as Yūzbak, the royal slave.

What events or opportunities prompted him to assert his power can only be conjectured. His past career in the court as described in the *Ṭabaqāt* does not show him up as a docile, unambitious officer, loyal in the service of the reigning king.¹¹ Whether the ascendancy of 'Imād al-Dīn Rayḥān's non-Turkish faction in the court of Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd and the resulting loss of power of Balban Ulugh Khān and the Turkish elements in the capital led Yūzbak to adopt a defiant attitude in the eastern frontier and appropriate for himself high sounding titles in place of the reigning king, as shown in the present inscription (no. iii above), is not improbable although his ambitious nature would need no argument to seize an opportunity. This he did and proclaimed through the silver coin dated in Ramaḍān, 653 A. H., "struck from the *kharāj* of Arzbadan or Nadiya" (no. iv above), the assumption of the supreme power as the Sulṭān al-'Aẓam, Mughith al-Duniya wal-Dīn Abūl Muẓaffar Yūzbak al-Sulṭān, while invoking directly the name of the reigning *Khalifah*, al-Musta'ṣim Billah. The *Ṭabaqāt* also speaks of his varying success in engagements with the powerful Ganga kings of Orissa (Jajnagar) and of his having occupied 'Umardan (or Arzbadan)' from the 'Rae of Jajnagar' which was followed by a rash expedition to Awadh where he had the *khuṭbah* read in his name as Sulṭān Mughith al-Dīn. Retreating in haste on the reported approach of a royal force 'from Delhi, he soon embarked on another rash undertaking by invading and occupying Kamrup and ultimately died a prisoner at the hands of the Kamrup forces.¹² When he died is not known but the silver issue (no. v above) marks the restoration of the authority of the Delhi Sulṭān. Who issued this coin in

10. *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣiri*, ed. by Abdul Hai Habibi, vol. II, 2nd edition, Kabul, 1342 A. H., pp. 30-31.

11. Having been favoured by Sulṭān Rukn al-Dīn Fīrūz, Iltutmish's son and successor, who appointed him to position of honour in the court, he distinguished himself by turning against him and acting as the ring-leader of an insurrection against the Tajik, officials of the king who were killed near Sirhind during an expedition the king undertook to suppress a revolt of the governors in the second year of the reign. The next two rulers Sulṭāna Rāziya and Mu'iz al-Dīn Bahram both favoured him and he received his first governorship of Tabarhindah from Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn Mas'ūd in 639 A. H. Transferred subsequently to Lahore he rebelled against the court, "for rashness and imperiousness was implanted in his nature" when he was recalled and pardoned on the special recommendation of Ulugh Khān Balban. At his next assignment of Kanouj he again began to act disobediently, was again recalled and again pardoned.

12. *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣiri* (Habibi), vol. II, p. 32.

Lakhnauti is not named but an indication is provided by the mention by the contemporary chronicler of one 'Izz al-Din Balban Yūzbakī (apparently a retainer of Yūzbak) who despatched in 657 A. H. a number of elephants and other presents and who thereupon was confirmed in the 'Iqtā (province) of Lakhnauti.¹³ A reference in the same account to the appointment of Mālik Mas'ūd Jānī (Jalāl al-Dīn Kulij Khān Mas'ūd Jānī of the Gangarampur inscription) under the year 656 A. H. however raises some difficulty but which can only be resolved by assuming that before Jānī could enter on his assignment the arrival of the presents from Lakhnauti together with professions of loyalty, caused this appointment to be cancelled. Previous to this appointment, Mas'ūd Jānī, in 656 A. H., had joined Mālik Qutlugh Khān, the Sulṭān's step father, in a rebellion against the court and had been forced to agree to an accommodation whereby Lakhnauti was conferred upon him. This event is dated in Shawwāl, 656 A. H., only five months before the presents from Lakhnauti arrived whereupon Ulugh Khān Balban exerted himself in having the investiture of Lakhnauti bestowed upon 'Izz al-Dīn Balban Yūzbakī, the sender of the presents, by the Sulṭān.¹⁴

The next man in the scene was Arslān Khān Sanjar who, having surrendered after his rebellious operations against the Sulṭān in alliance with Qutlugh Khān and Mas'ūd Jānī in 656 A.H., was appointed in 657 A.H. to the governorship of Karrah. In the same year he led his forces secretly and without royal sanction, to the gates of Lakhnauti, from where the governor Yūzbakī was at the time away on an expedition, and occupied the city and pillaged it for three days. Yūzbakī returned, gave battle, was defeated and slain.¹⁵ This forcible occupation of the province is not evidenced by any numismatic or epigraphic record so far discovered and he was still ruling in Lakhnauti when the chronicler Minhāj closes his account in 658 A. H. He is reported to have never acknowledged Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd's sovereignty although he himself does not appear to have assumed regal titles. The fact as recorded by Ziauddin Barani, that on the first year of Balban's accession in 664 A. H., Tatar Khān, son of Arslān Khān, sent a large number of elephants from Lakhnauti along with other presents, would prove that he had succeeded his father but was prudent enough to acknowledge the new Sulṭān of Delhi.¹⁶ The Baradari, Bihar Sharif, Inscription (no. iv above) has been interpreted to refer to the erection of the tomb of his father who is referred therein only as Sulṭān Shāh. The identification would require more convincing evidence.

The earliest coin issued from Lakhnauti in the name of the Delhi Sulṭān Balban is a silver issue whose date cannot be read as earlier than 667 A.H. (it could well be 669¹⁷). It is possible that this was issued by Tatar Khān who is not known to have been defiant of Delhi authority after 665 A. H., the date of the Baradari inscription in which, however, he gives himself no higher title than that of Amīr (صاحب العدل والرافة - خلد الله منكمه و امارته).

13. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 495 ; vol. II, p. 78.

14. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 78.

15. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 24.

16. Ziauddin Barani, *Tārīkh-i-Firūzshāhī*, Bibliotheca Indica, 1862, p. 53 also p. 66.

17. H. N. Wright, *Sultans of Delhi, their Coinage and Metrology*, Delhi, 1936, p. 59, no. 243A ; *CCIM*, vol. II, no. 154.

The structure mentioned in the inscription was evidently some kind of *chillakhāna* or special house of meditation meant for those who are given to constant religious exercises in total retirement from worldly distractions. Such buildings were not strictly necessary for a Muslim community as a mosque is, and could be meaningful only in places with a settled Muslim population where men of such religious ardour could be found or are frequented by recluses because of a shrine or a saint who would inspire such religious devotions. This record was inscribed within two generations of the conquest of North Bengal by the Muslim Turks who, as late as 1236 were still busy overrunning and terrorising the country side in southern Bihar,¹³ the process must have continued much later in north Bengal. In such a situation and in the manner in which expansion of Turkish military dominion took place the existence of a settled Muslim population, not engaged in sedentary occupation like trade, commerce or agriculture, and not dependent on participation in the conquest process, should be rather exceptional. Is such an exceptional situation postulated by the special religious house mentioned in the present inscription? Could it be possible that wherever the building was originally put up, it was a place of commercial importance with a Muslim population affluent enough to patronise the shrine or the religious establishment? That there were Muslim artisans, technicians and traders in Eastern India can now be documented with certainty from the recently discovered account book of the construction of the Konark temple in Orissa (built in the middle of the 13th century) in which Muslim metallurgists worked for several months in casting iron girders,¹⁴ and where mention is made of the collection of government taxes in Muslim 'tankas' (with 'bānkālekhā') from traders putting up shops in the camps of construction workers.¹⁵ And this, even when the Orissan King Narasinha I (1238-1264) was leading victorious expedition against the 'Nawab of Nakhauti' and plundering the palace of 'Tugaina Khan'.¹⁶ It is well-known that the sudden raid by Muhammad B. Bakhtiyar on the Sena capital was facilitated by the disguise his troopers wore as horse-dealers which being a familiar sight evoked no surprise or opposition. The exact place where the building of this inscription was put up can perhaps never be ascertained, nor can the Konark artisans and traders be necessarily connected with that place. But would it be wholly unfounded to suggest that in Bengal as elsewhere in India Muslim traders/artisans preceded, not followed, the military occupation? The pattern of events would thus be the same as we know was the case in the 18th/19th century European imperialist expansion, first the trader, then the missionary and finally the soldier.

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13. G. Roerich, *Biography of Dharmasvamin (Chag lo-tsa-ba Chos-rje-dpal) : A Tibetan Monk Pilgrim*, Patna. 1959. pp. xviii-xxii, 63-64, 90, 93-94.
14. *Baya Chakara*, translated by Alice Boner, Sadasiva Rathasarma and others, in *New Light on the Sun Temple of Konark*, Varanasi, 1972. pp. 57, 68, 93, 116.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 69, 100.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 88, 116-117. This expedition took place in 1245, see footnote.

LATE MEDIAEVAL TEMPLES OF WEST BENGAL : AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR ARCHITECTS AND BUILDERS

TARAPADA SANTRA

Artisans belonging to the *sūtradhara* community of Bengal have left an exquisite account of their craftsmanship through sculptural work and architectural styles of the late mediaeval temples of this region. For their livelihood they depended on professional work through four media—*kāṣṭha*, *pāṣāṇa*, *mṛttikā* and *citra* and many of them were experts in all these artistic media at the same time. The Sanskrit word *sūtradhara* signifies that while working with wood, stone, clay or paint, they were called upon to hold the mason's or carpenter's line or string (*sūtra*) for making various measurements. The holding of the *sūtra* at every stage of work made their products precise and faultless even in details. The valuable artistic contributions of this particular community (to speak of only one branch of their activities) is well proved by the extant temples of several districts in West Bengal. The architectural styles and sculptural embellishments of these temples not only bear testimony to the artistic merit of this community but also provide us with an interesting glimpse of the social and theological life of the contemporary period.

Outside the boundaries of Bengal, investigation and discovery of the contributions of *sūtradharas* as architects and the knowledge about the places where they had their bases still remain a topic largely neglected by scholars. A proper estimation of the varying sculptural styles accompanied by a comparative analysis of the different regional settlements of *sūtradharas* are aspects of research which should be taken up at the very beginning of any serious temple study of any particular region. A general examination and evaluation of different temple inscriptions of West Bengal can throw much light on the concentration of *sūtradharas* in various pockets of this State.

With this end in view, I ventured to investigate inscriptional evidence from different temples mainly belonging to Howrah, Medinipur, Hughli, Bankura, Birbhum, Burdwan and 24-Parganas districts of West Bengal. Generally speaking, many inscriptional tablets found on these temples include various types of information about their date and year of construction, name of temple architects and their addresses. Information of this nature constitutes a valuable basic source for further research. Many other temples are, however, provided with inscriptions limited to their dates and/or years of construction only.

Inscriptional evidence from Vishnupur, Bankura, date the temples mainly from the beginning of the 17th century A. D. An earlier temple has been discovered in the Medinipur district. It is the *Simhavāhini* temple of Konnagar village within Ghantal police station. From the inscriptions on it, we come to know that it was erected in 1490 A. D. But the Vishnupur or the Ghantal temple inscriptions do not enlighten us regarding the architects though they are clear in mentioning dates of establishment and names of donors.

Inscriptional reference to temple architects date mainly from the 18th century A. D. Absence of architects' names during the 17th century and periods preceding it is an interesting aspect which can hardly be ignored. It might be due to various social inhibitions and customs which prevented proper recognition of temple-architects. The powerful and rigid type of contemporary feudal society probably relegated the architects to a lowly position and thought they were not worthy of being recognised in temple inscriptions.

During the 18th century, the situation eased and changed to a sufficient extent. Rural merchants and urban businessmen, various types of producers, large and small landholders and others surfaced to the top of the society during this period. These people wanted to perpetuate their names as temple donors. Consequently, in the inscriptions of these temples we come across the names of donors which are usually accompanied by the names of artists and temple architects who were responsible for erecting their structures.

That the members of the *sūtradhara* community were real artist-architects of the late mediaeval temples of Bengal is now proved beyond any doubt. In temple inscriptions we find mention of various surnames typically used and extant among *sūtradharas* even today. In some instances the *sūtradharas* are mentioned by their caste-names. On the Indās temple of Bankura district, the name of the architect is given as Viṣṇurām Sūtradhar. Again, the same artist-craftsman is mentioned in other places as Viṣṇurām Mistrī giving a more prominent stress on the professional aspects of the surname. Haripada Mistrī of Kunchakole (Bankura district) also presented himself elsewhere as Haripada Sūtradhar. In the *pañcaratna* temple of the Māiti family of Narajol in Medinipur district, the temple architect is mentioned as Śrīrām Sūtradhar. In the same district we also come across one Govinda Sūtradhar as a temple-architect hailing from Vishnupur. On a temple at Sonamukhi in Bankura district we find Śrīhari Sūtradhar as its architect. At Thaley-Rasipur in Howrah district, architects' names are given as Guirām Sūtradhar and Jīvan Sūtradhar.

The most important and mentionable information in this connection comes from Ber-Janardan village in Medinipur district. Here the temple-architect Śrī Nārāyaṇa is mentioned in the temple inscription as Nārāṇ Chutār. On many occasions temple-architects mentioned their professional surname *mistrī* as well followed by their forenames and then the surnames of the caste-names, e.g., Mistrī Śītalprasād Canda, etc. Besides this, mention of only professional surnames was also popular. Thus we come across names like Śrī Rasik

Mistrī. This practice was widely used in temples of various districts in West Bengal, viz., Howrah, Hughli, Medinipur, Bankura and 24-Parganas, etc. In some areas of Burdwan and Birbhum districts they referred themselves as *Kārigar* and *Rāj* meaning artisan and mason respectively. Surnames found on temple inscriptions may be compared with extant surnames found among the *sūtradhara* community of the present period. Dās, Pāl, De, Datta, Sāin, Candra, Bardhan, Rāy, Māity, Śil, Rām, Kuṇḍu, Kar, etc. are some of the surnames used in *sūtradhara* families. This fact is extremely important because it leads to the conclusion that a long period of the history of Bengal was enlivened by the *sūtradharas* through their considerable contributions in the making of temples and other structures, preparation of wooden chariots or *rathas*, making of various kinds of *paṭa*-paintings and drawings and stone-carvings. The regional account of the *sūtradhara* community can be known from their different sections or *thāks*. *Sūtradharas* of Bagri area of Medinipur give an account of four such sections or *thāks* known as *Bardhamāna-thāk*, *Māndāran-thāk*, *Kharipetyā-thāk* and *Bhāskara-thāk*. The last two *thāks* are, however, more related to their livelihood and profession as craftsmen. The *sūtradharas* of Daspur are divided into *thāks* of *Bardhamāna*, *Āṅkule*, *Uḍiyā* and *Bhāskara*. *Sūtradharas* of Burdwan district are, again, divided into four *thāks* which clearly denote their respective professional character, viz., *Kāṣṭhakāra*, *Bhāskara*, *Citrakara* and lastly, *Mṛttikāra*.

In the erection of late mediaeval temples of Bengal, communities other than *sūtradharas* also participated. In the Dubrajpur village of Birbhum we find a good example of this kind. In addition to this, we come across Muslims as architects of Bengal temples in some inscriptional evidences. Pānāullāh Kāzi of Tajpur in Hughli district erected in 1890 the *Durgā dālān* of Jibta village in Bankura district. In 1898 Śeikh Mayjaddi erected the *śikhara deul* of Raypara of Karidhya village in Birbhum. It should be noted here that even in an area largely inhabited by *sūtradharas* like Daspur in Medinipur district, a Muslim architect named Makshed Mistrī of Hatgeche erected the Śītalā *mandir* at Radhakrishnapur as late as in 1927. These contributions of Muslim masons and architects speak of the liberal social atmosphere amongst the various communities.

A district-wise analytical study of inscriptional material reveals that Daspur area of Medinipur district was the most important settlement of *sūtradharas*. It is to be noted that the early temples belonging to the 15th century also belong to neighbouring areas and this tradition continued through subsequent periods. Between 1720 and 1799, the temple inscriptions of this area only mentioned the names of the temple-architects without any reference to their home villages. Śrī Chaku Pāl of Deuli (1720), Śrī Nārāyaṇa Chutār of Ber-Janardanpur (1787), Gopāl Candra of Punyapat (1790), Śrī Śyāma Carana Mistrī of Ghantal-Konnagar (1794), and Śrī Balarāma of Kadilpur (1799) are such examples. The famous temple-architects of Cheto-Daspur area were Sāphalyarāma Candra (1781), Gopāla Candra (1790), Śatrughna Candra (1805), Locan Candra (1805), Bṛndābana Candra (1842), Harahari Candra (1822), Ṭhākurdās Śil (1846), Ānanda Mistrī (1845), Haridās Mistrī (1858), Lodhan Sāin (1859), Śītalprasād Canda (1862), Mādhava Mistrī (1865),

Śrī Haricarāṇa Dās (1867), Śrī Gopāl Candra De (1890), Jaduratha Śil (1903), and Śrī Śaśībhūṣaṇa Mistrī (1905).

In the neighbouring villages of Cheto-Daspur like Ranichak, Kalmijor, Khirpai, Benai, Barda, Ajurya, Gaura, Gopiganj and Navinmanua the noteworthy builders and architects are Gopāl Mistrī (1833), Badan Candra (1856) and Rūpcānd Kuṇḍu (1879), Rāmtanu Mistrī (1878), Śrīmanta Mistrī (1879), Pañcānan Mistrī (1889), Saday Sāin (1902), Adhar Kuṇḍu (1903), Tinkaḍi Mistrī (1932) and Dharmadās Kuṇḍu (1902). Rajhati is a village within Panskura Thana of Medinipur district, where we come across the names of two temple builders, Dwarikānāth Mistrī (1856) and Udaycand Paṇḍit (1881). Migrant architects from Vishnupur area who came to this region were Sanātan Mistrī (1856), builder of Bagri temple and Śrī Govinda Sūtradhar (1926) of the Jogardanga temple. Rest of the temple builders came to this area from Senhat of Jahanabad Pargana in Hughli district. They were Kārtik Candra Mistrī and Māhindralal Mistrī (1864) who built the *13-ratna* temple of Kharar village. In Raypara of the same village Māhindra Mistrī of Senhat also built another *āṭcālā* temple. In 1921 Aśvinī Mistrī of Senhat erected the *dālān* temple of Jishnuhari in Tamluk. This artist-architect Aśvinī Kuṇḍu was a well-known architect among the builders of Hughli district. Giridhar Mistrī, also from Jahanabad Pargana of Hughli district, went from his native village Ghoshpur to Dehati village of Medinipur and erected there one *pañcaratna* temple (1848). The name of the native village of Haridās Datta, builder of a temple (1835) at Amanpur was Neharpara. Similarly, the name of the native village of Kālī Mistrī of Jakpur temple of Medinipur district is Torapara. But Neharpara and Torapara have not been indentified so far. It is, therefore, safe to conclude that Chetua Pargana of Daspur in Medinipur district was a long standing and well known settlement of accomplished *sūtradhara* temple builders. Here once lived about two hundred families belonging to the *sūtradhara* community. Builders from this area were experts in erecting *ratna* and *śikhara* temples of various types.

On a review of the aforesaid temple-architects' works, we observe that the name only of Gopāl Candra was mentioned in the inscription of a *pañcaratna* temple (1790) at Punyapat. But he was identified with his address as an architect in the inscription of a *pañcaratna* temple of Modak family at Lowada built in 1805 A. D. Another *navaratna* temple near the temple of the said Modak family was erected in 1819 by two architects, namely, Locan Candra and Bṛndābana Candra both of whom hailed from Daspur. From these documentary evidences, we may come to the conclusion that Locan Candra specialized in building *ratna* style of temples. Bṛndābana Candra also employed his artistic skill to build a *śikhara deul* at Lowada Hattala 23 years after the construction of the said *navaratna* temple. Like other architects of Daspur, Ānandarām Dās of the same village built the *rāsmāñca* at Chandramer in 1845 A. D. and 2 years later the *āṭcālā* temple at Uttar-Govindanagar.

Among the temple buiders of Chetua-Daspur, the largest number could be assigned to Ṭhākurdās Śil who built at least five temples of artistic merit. The *navaratna*

temple of Cakravarti family of Daspur was built by him in 1846. After three years he erected the temple of Surathpur. Both of these temples are decorated with beautiful terracotta plaques. The turrets of temples built by Daspur architects are noted for their simple and unserrated tops. But Ṭhākurdās followed the Daspur style in respect of the temple of Cakravarti family while in regard to the Surathpur temple he constructed the turrets of serrated type. Four years after the completion of the Surathpur temple, Ṭhākurdās erected a well proportioned *tulsīmañca* of *pañcaratna* type in Husainibazar of Daspur. Three years later, i.e., in 1856, he built the simple *śikhara deul* at Balarampur. After four years Ṭhākurdās erected another *śikhāra deul* with terracotta decorations in the Daspur style. Five years later Ṭhākurdās erected the *śikhara deul* at Cakbajit village. The achievement of Ṭhākurdās within twenty years of his working life is amply proved by inscriptional evidences from these temples. Many other temples were probably erected by him but without relevant temple inscriptions it is very difficult to assign them to Ṭhākurdās. In this connection, we may examine a couplet in an inscription regarding Ṭhākurdās in *tripadī* metre. In the Balarampur temple-inscription the account of Ṭhākurdās and his associates were given in the following manner :

‘Śrī Śrī Sitārām Candra Jiu
 Śuna sarvajan kari nivedan
 Mandir nirmāṇ kathā
 Dāspure vās mistrī Ṭhākurdās
 Śil padavīte gānthā.
 Mistrīr saṅge ātjan karilen gāthan
 Sakale kehomatā pūrṇa,
 Ārambha ṣaṭṣaṣṭhi sāle gelo din Haribole,
 Āṭṣaṣṭhīr āṣāḍe sampūrṇa.’

Probably artist with names ending with Śil had a tradition of preparing inscribed temple-plaques in rhymes. In this respect Jadurath Śil of Daspur followed the tradition of Ṭhākurdās. On the Ajurya temple erected in 1902 the inscription reads :

‘Śrī Śrī Manasā mātā, Śrī Śrī Śitalā mātā
 Śuna śuna sarvajan mandir nirmāṇ kathā
 Dāspure vās mistrī Jadurath
 Śil padavīte gānthā.
 Mistrīr saṅge bāro jan karilo mandir gāthan
 Sakale.....(illegible)
 San 1308 sāle gelo din Haribole
 San 1309 sāle sampanna.’

The intrinsic similarity between the above mentioned two *tripadī* couplets is extremely interesting. It is now difficult for us to know whether Jadurath was a descendant of Ṭhākurdās, the veteran architect or not.

The artisan-builders of Rajhati of Medinipur district are also worthy of special mention. Udaycānd Paṇḍit of Rajhati erected in 1881 the *āṭcālā* temple of Govindapur.

The architects of Rajhati followed a style of temple building in which the upper *cārcālā* is so small as to resemble a small pinnacle. Temples of this type built by architects of Rajhati are also met with in other areas like Krishnanagar, etc. The Rajhati area of Medinipur is to be differentiated from another village of the same name near Senhati of Hughli district. That Rajhati was a large village inhabited by *sūtradharas* is still remembered by the elders of this locality. In course of time this village was over-grown with jungles due to the havoc created by a great malaria epidemic. The *āmalaka* surmounted *śikhara* temple of Rajhati draws our special attention. There are large *mithuna* plaques on this temple. This temple can be compared with a temple of Rajnagar near a village referred to above as Govindapur. By this style alone, it becomes recognizable that these temples were all erected by Rajhati builders.

The Vishnupur temples of Bankura district were commissioned by the Malla Rājās of Vishnupur and it may be assumed that these temples were erected by *sūtradhara* builders of the locality. At present there is a sizeable *sūtradhara* community in Vishnupur town itself. Sanātan Mistrī of Vishnupur built the *pañcaratna* temple of Bagri in Medinipur district in the year 1856. Much later, in the year 1926, Śrī Govinda Sūtradhar of Vishnupur-Krishnaganj built the *pañcaranta* temple of Jogardanga in Garbeta. The later *ratna* temples of squat type reminds us of the style of these Vishnupur temple architects.

Beside Vishnupur, Sonamukhi, Rolgram, Balsi, Kunchakol, Balyara (or modern Bahulara) and Lokpur in Bankura district, were also great centres of the *sūtradharas*. *Sūtradharas* of these areas are noted by their preference for indented *śikharas*, squat *ratnas* and *āṭcālās* in the temple architecture. Among builders of Sonamukhi and Balsi, Rāmhari Mistrī of Sonamukhi built the Pratapeśvar *śikhara deul* of Kalna. It is probable that several serrated *śikhara* temples near the Burdwan palace were built by the architects of this area. In Sonamukhi itself temples of this style are also extant. Hari Sūtradhar built in 1846, a temple named *Śrīdhara Mandir* embellished with exquisite sculptural decoration which reminds us of the beauty of the Sonamukhi style of temples. The Bankadaha *āṭcālā* temple was built in the year 1846 through the joint efforts of *sūtradhara* artists from Balsi which is revealed by the temple inscription: *Ekhāne Śrī Nārāyaṇ Mistrī halen kārigar diger-sāṅ : Balsi*. *Sūtradharas* from Balsi also built many temples in Patrasayar and Indas areas of Bankura. In the family history of the Maṇḍal family of Hodal-Narayanpur written by Jatindramohan Maṇḍal, we find that Śivanārāyaṇa Maṇḍal received Nārāyaṇa Sūtradhar of Balsi and 20/25 mistries working under him. He erected many beautiful buildings with their help and embellished his residential house and erected a three-storied *saptadaśa-cūḍā rāsmañca* covered with decorations over a period of two and a half years. The construction of this beautiful temple cost Rs. 14,000/- even in those days of low prices. It has been observed that Nārāyaṇa Sūtradhar built the temples of Bankadaha and Hodal-Narayanpur with a gap of only six years. He decorated these temples with beautiful sculptured plaques. The builders of Balsi also adhered to a special style of *ratna-mandir* construction. Instead of sloping roofs they introduced flat roofs

in the *ratna* temple and placed the terracotta plaques in a special manner in which the whole of the temple facade presented a continuous depiction of scenes without any vertical divisions which we usually see in other temples of this class.

On the western areas of Hughli district near the boundaries of Bankura, temple architects of Bakhati village of Hughli district built many extant temples. Śrī Pulindās Mistrī of Bakhati built in 1961 the Radha-Damodar temple of the Lāhā family of Baital. Śrī Rāmmohan Mistrī of Bakhati erected in 1785 the *pañcaratna* temple of Konarpur village. In 1844, Gaṅgānārāyaṇa Mistrī also built another *pañcaratna* temple at Moynapur but the native village of the builder has not been given in the extant temple inscription. In the year 1793, Sāphalyarām De, hailing from Kanpur village of Arambagh police station, built a two-storied *dālān mandir* at Bhagalpur village of Kotulpur police station. In the year 1833, Jatirām Mistrī from Sanota participated in building the terracotta temple of Jibta village also under Kotulpur police station.

Further information regarding the settlement of *sūtradhara* temple builders is found from some material now kept at Jogesh Candra Purākīrti Bhavan at Vishnupur. From these we come to know about *sūtradhara* builders residing at Bhara and Inimpur villages. Bhara is situated some seven miles to the east of the present Vishnupur town and is inhabited, even now, by a small *sūtradhara* community.

Jahanabad Pargana of Hughli has been referred to as the home of many builders of the *sūtradhara* caste. On the western borders of Hughli district the artist-builders of Khanakul-Krishnanagar, Senhat, Mayal, Ghoshpur, Bakhati and Kanpur are worthy of recognition. They are mentioned on many extant temple-inscriptions. In 1864 Kārtik Mistrī and Māhindra Mistrī of Senhat erected a thirteen-*ratna* temple at Kharar near Ghantal. In 1878 Māhindra Mistrī erected a beautiful *āṭcālā* in Kharar's Raypara. In 1913 Aśvinī Kuṇḍu of Senhat built the *śikhara* temple of Ubidpur. He also built the *dālān* temple at Tamluk in 1921. Pañcānan Kuṇḍu, a *sūtradhara* of Senhat, built as late as in 1940 a temple at Rajhat. In addition to this, Hajipur, Solempur, Nischinte-bazar, Mayal, all within the western parts of Hughli district, had a large number of *sūtradhara* artist-architects who built during the first part of the 19th century many notable temples at Badanganj, Mamudpur, Malaypur and Raspur (in Howrah district). The temple builders of Hughli were proficient in the erection of *āṭcālā* and *ratna* temples. Arambagh subdivision as a whole and Khanakul, Bali-Dewanganj and Pursura areas of Hughli district can boast of a large number of terracotta temples noted for their beauty of sculptural decorations and architectural proportions.

In the eastern parts of Hughli district the names of temple-builders are not so numerous. In 1764, Kriṣṇadās built temples at Ballabhpur near Srirampur. Śrī Bāñcārām built another temple at Harirampur in the year 1738. But no mention was made of the native villages of these builders in the extant temple inscriptions. But in this case we must not

fail to note that an area of Harirampur village is even now known as *Chutor-pukur*, the pond of the *sūtradharas*. There is still much scope of further investigations in the eastern parts of this district.

In Howrah district the settlements of *sūtradhara* architects were mainly in Rautara, Jhikhira, Binola-Krishnabati, Nischintapur and Thalia areas. The special character of the Howrah temples is seen on both *ratna* and *āṭcālā* temples. The *sūtradharas* of this region were famous for temple building, beautiful wood carvings, terracotta work, *paṅkha* (lime-plaster) work, and wooden *rathas* decorated with traditional *paṭacitra*-painting. For this reason orders and commissions poured in from all parts of Bengal to the Howrah region. In the Dilakas village of Hughli a beautiful wooden image of *Bhairavi* was prepared by Jāminikānta Rakṣit of Thalia of Howrah district. Similarly in the Jangipara police station of Hughli district, we often come across various wooden specimens prepared by *sūtradhara* artists from Thalia. In the year 1798, the Kolikata village of Howrah district witnessed the building of a temple of *āṭcālā* type by Abhayacaraṇ Mistrī of Thalia. In 1840, Rāmmohan Mistrī of Thalia renovated the Mahisamuri temple. During the thirties of the present century, Binod Bihari Candra of this village came to be renowned as a *sūtradhara*-builder. Atul Śīl's temple at Jantigram, Sankarmath of Ramrajatala and the *navaratna* temple of Kulia enhanced the reputation of Binod Bihari Candra to a great extent. Śrī Rāmprasād Candra Mistrī of Rautara erected in 1820, a terracotta decorated *navaratna* temple at Ganeshpur village. Next year he erected the *dālān* temple of Kālī at Kalyanpur village. The fine *paṅkha* (lime-plaster) work of both Ganeshpur and Kalyanpur villages point to the special feature of his artistic expression. In the Rautara village the local architect Gopāl Karmī erected a terracotta decorated temple belonging to the earlier part of the 18th century. Towards the end of the same century, Balairām erected a temple of *navaratna* type at Kalyanpur village. But there is no mention of the name of the architect's native village in the temple inscription. On the other hand, in Deulpur village of Howrah district, we find a *bārocālā* temple with *rathapaga* projection which was erected by an architect who belonged to Keshabpur village of Domjur police station. Upto the present time no thorough investigation has been undertaken in this region. At present due to the absence of kind partons the local *sūtradharas* mainly pursue wood-work, *paṭacitra*-paintings and making of clay images.

Guskara, Ketugram, Bangram, Banpas, Satgeche and Kolkon are some of the villages which were inhabited by the *sūtradhara* architects of Burdwan district. This fact is fully established by various temple inscriptions. From the inscription of Thupsara temple of Birbhum district we come to know that Pilsonha and Sochandey villages were noted for *sūtradhara* architects. Now these villages are within the limits of Guskara police station in Burdwan.

In Burdwan a popular rhyme is extant about the *sūtradhara* settlements.¹ The popular rhyme runs like this :

1. I received this information from my friend Śrī Pārvasī Cakravartī. He collected the same from Śrī Śībdās Kuṇḍu, a *sūtradhara* of Ambalgram.

*'Bardhamān jelā haygo Cherendā
Sūtradhar Dāsghar Paramānanda
Jhāmutpure rahego Rāmaicandra
Peneray ghar Kuṇḍu Gaurāṅga
Kopor Pāl hay Gaṅgārām
Kandarpa Śil hay Ketugrām
Tentuler Poḍā Nanda Datta
Baharāner De Caitanya khyāta
Jeyopādār Sāgar Kar
Eimata ghar sūtradhar.'*

In this ballad we find the names of famous temple-builders of Burdwan district. Thus Paramānanda Dāsghar of Cherenda, Rāmaicandra of Jhamutpur, Gaurāṅga Kuṇḍu of Penera, Gaṅgārām Pāl of Kopo. Kandarpa Śil of Ketugram, Nanda Datta of Tentule, Caitanya De of Baharan and Sāgar Kar of Jeyopara were renowned far and wide about two hundred years ago.

We come across the names of Banśidhar and Megharām, both of Ketugram of Burdwan district, in the *āṭcālā* temple inscription of Labhpur in Birbhum district. They built this temple in the year 1850. Goloknāth Rāj of Bonpas built the *dālān mandir* of Bankati in the year 1818. Raghunāth Mistrī of Kolkon built a peculiar *rāsmañca* (like Candranāth Śiva *mandir* of Hetampur, Birbhum), at Maukhira. In 1830 Kamalrām of Banagram built the *dālān* temple of Bankati. The *āṭcālā* temple of Jabuigram was built in 1815 by Rāmmohan Pāl of Satgeche. Pītāambar Mistrī of Pilsonha was assisted by Sudhākriṣṇa Mistrī of Sochandey in preparing the terracotta decorations and other ornamental work. There are many temples in Burdwan district which are yet to be discovered. The majority of these temples belong to *ratna* and *āṭcālā* types. But names of architects of these temples are seldom found in the temple inscriptions. Panchkhewa, Sitahati, Khandaghosh, Oanri, Nabastha, Putunda, Narna, etc. possess temple-inscriptions with names of architects without any mention of their native villages.

In Birbhum majority of the temples are of *ratna* and *śikhara* types. Temple-inscriptions from this district reveal that temples of this area were mainly built by architects coming from Burdwan district. Only two villages named Sanota and Dubrajpur have extant settlements of temple builders. Sanota is a village within Nanur police station. Śrī Brajanāth and Gopināth Rāj of this village erected the *ratna* temple of Charkal in 1860. The temple at Tarapith, built in 1818, was erected with the help of six architects who were locally called *Rāj*. But here we do not find any mention of the native villages from where they came. There is no doubt in the fact that Rāmmohan Rāj of Satgeche was one of the above mentioned architects.

Some mention should be made of artist-architects of Dubrajpur. The inscriptions on the two extant *ratna* temples of this place explicitly point out that the architects of

these temples did not belong to the *sūtradhara* caste. The terracotta ornamented temple of Dubrajpur by the side of Nandipukur was built by Gopināth Hāḍi in 1867. Nanda Bāgdī was again utilised in 1874 for erecting the 13-*ratna mandir* at Hatala of the same village while the work of ornamental decoration of this temple was assigned to Gopināth Hāḍi. From this it is clear that Hāḍis and Bāgdīs belonging to the so-called 'low-castes' were successful in executing masterly pieces of craftsmanship of rare beauty. Here another question naturally crops up. Why men of Hāḍi and Bāgdī castes suddenly took up the profession of *sūtradharas*? It seems that during the past ages more arduous and hard work connected with temple building was probably assigned to lower strata of the caste orders. Gradually these artists of poorer classess acquired a sense of craftsmanship.²

In the remaining districts, the collection of names of temple architects yet remains to be taken up. In some temple-inscriptions of 24-Parganas the artist-architects' names are mentioned without any mention of their native villages. Only in Chaygadiya temple of 1852 we find a terracotta plaque from which we learn that this temple was erected by Śricandra Mistrī of Birnagar. Here it must be noted that the well known village Birnagar (formerly Ula) of Nadiya district is renowned as a centre of *sūtradharas* and that these people were responsible for erecting the *ratna* temple of Thakurbari of this place at a later date.

Thus we may safely come to the conclusion that Chetua-Daspur in Medinipur district, Thalia-Rautara and Binola-Krishnabati of Howrah district, Khanakul-Senhati and Bakhati of Hughli district, Vishnupur-Balsi-Kunchakol of Bankura district, Guskura and Ketugram of Burdwan district, Sanota and Dubrajpur of Birbhum district and Birnagar of Nadiya district constitute the basic areas where once flourished settlements of *sūtradhara* community of West Bengal.

Investigations regarding the past temple-builders also reveal few other related facts of considerable importance. These facts are as follows :

- (a) The names and numbers of assistants who worked under the master builders are found on many temple-inscriptions.

2. Recently, many unfounded and peculiar comments and opinions have been made regarding the Hāḍi mistrīs of Dubrajpur. The Kabilaspur temple of Birbhum district has an inscription about Mehatari Haridās. Dr. D. C. Sircar has opined that the name originated from the Gujarati word *Mehtar* and that people from that area came and inhabited in parts of Birbhum. Sri Debkumar Chakravarti, the author of '*Birbhūm Jelār Purākīrti*' (in Bengali) published by P. W. Department, Government of West Bengal, has written that *Mehtari* means *methar* or sweeper because it is accompanied by the name of Gopināth Hāḍi. Actually, in Birbhum district, craftsman proficient in local iron-smelting have long been known by their surname as *Miātur* and/or *Mehtari*. So there is absolutely no basis for these far fetched and erroneous comments and conclusions.

- (b) On some occasions the financial ability of the temple donor determined the size and style of temples.
- (c) Sometimes the amount expended for erecting a temple was mentioned in rupees.
- (d) That different artists were employed for erection and fixing of decorated temple-plaque of terracotta.
- (e) That the time covered for erection of a particular temple had also been mentioned in many of temple inscriptions.
- (f) Mention of typical surnames contained in many inscriptions facilitates a full-scale study of the *sūtradhara* community.
- (g) That architect-artists or temple-builders did not restrict their temple building activity within a narrow region ; rather they travelled far and wide.

[The plates XXX and XXXI for the above article reached us very late to be mentioned in the text. *Editor*]

VIKRAMAŚĪLA MAHĀVIHĀRA¹

FREDERICK M. ASHER

The site of Vikramaśīla, the great monastery known from Buddhist tradition to have been founded by Dharmapāla (c. 783-818),² has been identified with several places, all in Bihar. Initially it was thought to have been at Silao,³ just north of Nālandā, and later Sultānganj⁴ was suggested as the site. Then Pātharghātā⁵ was put forth, still later Keur,⁶ and most recently Antichak.⁷ When I first visited Antichak, about six miles north-east of Colgong in Bhāgalpur district, hopeful of seeing remains which would give a clear indication of Vikramaśīla Mahāvihāra, I was disappointed since the evidence revealed at that stage was not convincing, although I was happy to have seen the eighth-century Vaiṣṇava reliefs on nearby Pātharghātā Hill. However, when I returned to the site in

1. This is an article which B. S. Verma, head of the Vikramaśīla Excavation Project of the Archaeological Survey of India, probably could have written better than I. But it can serve at least as an announcement of his excellent work and most important discoveries in anticipation of the publication of his results. Preliminary reports on the excavations, when they were conducted by Professors B. P. Sinha and R. C. Prasad Sinha under the sponsorship of the Department of Ancient Indian History and Archaeology, Patna University, appeared in *Indian Archaeology, A Review*, 1960-61 through 1968-69. The Archaeological Survey of India began work at the site in 1973.
2. The site is best known from Tāranātha who says, "He [Dharmapāla] also built the Śrī Vikramaśīla vihāra. It was built in the north of Magadha on the bank of the Gaṅgā on top of a hillock. The central temple in it had a human size statue of Mahābodhi. Around it, there were fifty-three smaller temples of Guhya-Tantra and fifty-four common temples. Thus he built [the monastery with a] total of one hundred and eight temples and the boundary walls." Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, ed., *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India*, Simla, 1970, pp. 274-75. The fact that it was not mentioned by either Hiuan Tsang or I-tsing lends credence to the statement that Vikramaśīla was built by Dharmapāla.
3. J. D. Beglar in Cunningham, ed., *Archaeological Survey of India Report*, vol. VIII, p. 84.
4. Satischandra Vidyabhusana, "Bikramasila Biswavidyalaya," *Bharati*, Baisakh, 1315 B. S., cited by Nundolal Dey, "The Vikramaśīla Monastery," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, New Series, vol. V, 1909, pp. 5-6.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-12.
6. A. Banerji-Sastri, "Keur—A Probable Site of Vikramaśīlā," *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, vol. XV, 1929, pp. 263-76.
7. Bhagwant Sahai, "Terracotta Plaques from Antichak," *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, vol. LVII, 1971, pp. 57-76.

May, 1975, I was awed by the remarkable *stūpa* and monastic complex which had been excavated by the Archaeological Survey of India. Though no inscriptional evidence has been found at Antichak to prove conclusively that the excavated *mahāvihāra* is Vikramaśīla, the arguments for associating Pātharghāṭā with Vikramaśīla (far more convincing than those put forth for any other site) would apply equally well to Antichak, less than a mile away. Moreover, the remarkable similarity of the Antichak *stūpa* to the one at Pāhārpur, that is Somapura Vihāra founded by Dharmapāla, indicates that the *mahāvihāra* at Antichak also must have been established during the time of Dharmapāla.

Like the Pāhārpur *stūpa* and the earlier temple of the Śālban Vihāra at Mainamati, the great tiered *stūpa* of Antichak (Plate XXXII, figs. 1-2) is oriented toward the north and is erected in the centre of the monastic dwelling, the cells being placed around the perimeter of the huge compound enclosure. This is significantly different from the arrangement at the Nandangarh *stūpa*,⁸ which probably served as a prototype of Vikramaśīla and Pāhārpur, and at the great *stūpa* of Nālandā Site no. 3, and, for that matter, at any other monastic site in India.

The *stūpa* itself bears a remarkable resemblance to the one at Pāhārpur. Not only are both approached from the north, as already mentioned, but more significantly, they have almost identical plans and elevations. They are also almost the same size, the structure at Antichak, 360 feet long from north to south, being just 3'-6" longer than the one at Pāhārpur. Such similarity is hardly a chance occurrence.

The lowest level, like the so-called basement level of the Pāhārpur monument, serves as a sort of platform (*jagati-piṭha*) for the upper portion of the structure. However, no terracotta panels have been placed at this level as they were at Pāhārpur, and there are no stone sculptures comparable to the ones which were placed at irregular intervals beneath the present-day ground level of the Pāhārpur monument.⁹

This platform serves as a circumambulatory pathway (*pradakṣiṇapatha*) for the main structure which rises from this level. Four massive chambers facing the cardinal directions, like the ones of the Pāhārpur monument, are the main feature of the monument. The mutilated remains of a stucco image in two of the chambers¹⁰ suggest the significance

8. J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, "South-East Asian Architecture and the Stūpa of Nandangarh," *Artibus Asiae*, vol. XIX, 1956, pp. 279-90.

9. Although one would expect some significance to the placement of the stone sculptures on the Pāhārpur monument — perhaps a meaning related to the *Karmavibhaṅga* reliefs on the lowest level of Barabaḍur — we reluctantly must conclude that they are so irregularly placed that they cannot have been part of the original plan of the monument. Hence it is not surprising that no such sculptures were found at Antichak.

10. *Indian Archaeology, A Review*, 1961-62, plate IIIA shows the remains of an image in the chamber on the southern side; *Indian Archaeology, A Review*, 1962-63, plate IXA shows the remains of an image in another unidentified chamber.

of the monument. Although one of the images was identified by the excavators as representing Avalokiteśvara,¹¹ there is no reason apparent to me to justify this identification, since only the feet and legs of the figure remained. In fact, it seems far more logical to assume that the four large chambers originally enshrined four images of the Buddha, each in a different *mudrā*, to signify four of the *dhyāni* Buddhas, similar in concept to those of the four sides of the first four levels of Barabūḍur.¹² The position of the fifth *dhyāni* Buddha is a question which logically follows but cannot be explained with certainty. The four great chambers at both Pāhārpur and Antichak do not lead to any central shrine; the monument is quite solid, and so one cannot postulate a plan like that of Chaṇḍi Sewu in Java.¹³ As for the top, at Antichak so much has been destroyed that it is not possible to determine with certainty what might have been there. However, at Pāhārpur the excavator saw what he assumed to be the remains of a verandah near the top, and he presumed that a *cella* was originally located at the summit.¹⁴ Although even less of the superstructure remained when I visited the site in 1974, I think it probable that the fifth *dhyāni* Buddha was associated with the upper level: either, images of this Buddha were placed around the upper verandah as they are at Barabūḍur or an image of this Buddha was enshrined at the summit. It may also be that the fifth *dhyāni* Buddha was not shown so that the appearance of both the Antichak and Pāhārpur monuments would have closely resembled the miniature *stūpas* adorned with four images of the Buddha known from innumerable sites in northern India.¹⁵ Sculptures on which the fifth *dhyāni* Buddha is not depicted, though undoubtedly implied, are known in the history of South Asian Art,¹⁶ so it seems apparent that it would not have been essential to depict this figure in order to complete the *maṇḍala*.

11. *Indian Archaeology, A Review*, 1962-63, p. 3.

12. For a superb analysis of these figures, see J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, "The Dhyani-Buddhas of Barabūḍur," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde*, vol. 121, 1965, pp. 389-416.

13. A. J. Bernet-Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian Art*, Amsterdam, 1959, p. 55, fig. 4 shows the plan of this temple.

14. K. N. Dikshit, *Excavations at Paharpur, Bengal*, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, no. 55, p. 14.

15. For example, one such *stūpa* from Rājshāhī is in the Dacca Museum, no. 421. That the figures in the niches of this and most similar miniature *stūpas* are intended to represent four of the *dhyāni* Buddhas is indicated by one *stūpa* in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, whose drum carries all five Buddhas, each associated with the appropriate *vāhana*. It is illustrated in R. D. Banerji, *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculptures*, Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series, vol. XLVII, p. 153 and pl. LXXVc. On those miniature *stūpas* which show only four Buddhas, I cannot explain the intended or implied position of the fifth.

16. J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, "The Kuṣṭarajāgala Image," *Paranavitana Felicitation Volume*, Colombo, 1965, pp. 253-61, discusses a Ceylonese image of Samantabhadra as the Ādi-Buddha and a Vajrasattva from Sārnāth both of which wear crowns showing four of the *dhyāni* Buddhas and states that fifth is invisible because it should be at the back of the crown. I, however, remain puzzled by such images, particularly in light of a Japanese representation of Samantabhadra as the Ādi-Buddha illustrated in "The Dhyani Buddhas of Barabūḍur," pl. 5: if the four *dikpālas* can be shown, why does the fifth *dhyāni* Buddha remain invisible on the back of the crown?

It now appears evident that there is no longer any reason to suppose that the plan of the Pāhārpur monument was based on a Jaina *caturmukha* shrine.¹⁷ The idea stems from the view that a Jaina monastery preceded the Buddhist one at Pāhārpur, but even that view, based on an interpretation of the inscription dated in the [Gupta] year 159 is less than certain.¹⁸ Now with the evidence of a second — and almost surely contemporary — Buddhist *stūpa* of the same form located not more than 75 direct miles away, there is no need to postulate a Jaina prototype. The significance of both monuments may be explained perfectly easily in a Buddhist context.

On the walls from the plinth, terracotta plaques about 13" × 11" that is about the same size as the ones on the Pāhārpur monument, were placed in a single row (Plates XXXIII-XXXIV, figs. 3-8). Although the surface of these panels appears considerably rougher than the surface of the terracotta panels on the Pāhārpur monument (Plate XXXV, figs. 10-11), apparently the result of salts which have leached to the surface, their style is quite similar, and it seems safe to assume that the panels of both monuments were made during the time of Dharmapāla. One scholar has recently discussed the terracotta panels at Antichak by organizing their subject-matter into categories.¹⁹ This reveals a great range of subjects, as at Pāhārpur, but it fails to indicate that at Antichak there is a noticeably greater preponderance of clearly Buddhist panels than at Pāhārpur. True, some evidently Brahmanical subjects appear such as the Ardhanārīśvara illustrated in fig. 8, and many panels show decorative motifs, fanciful figures, and scenes which appear to represent secular life. But there are also places where three adjacent panels illustrate a Buddha with his attendant Bodhisattva at each side, as seen, for example, in fig. 5. This, then, contradicts the opinion of Bhagwant Sahai who observed, "But what strikes our notice at once is that in the arrangement of the plaques around the mound the artists did not care for any sequential arrangement to them, and it was nothing but chance that determined if a plaque with human figures was to be followed by a striding monkey, a goose or a conch."²⁰ However, at Pāhārpur I have not seen among the panels remaining *in situ* any two or more which form a coherent relationship.

17. The view was first suggested by Dikshit, p. 7 and subsequently endorsed by S. K. Saraswati in R. C. Majumdar, ed., *The History of Bengal*, vol. I, Dacca, 1943, p. 507.

18. K. N. Dikshit, "Paharpur Copper-Plate Grant of the [Gupta] Year 159," *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. XX, 1929-30, pp. 59-64. The Inscription refers to a donation for the maintenance of necessities of worship for the *Arhats* at the *vihāra* at Vaṭa-Gohālita which was presided over by the disciples of the disciples of one Guhanandi, whose titles were *Kāśika-pañca-stūpa-nikāyika-nirgrantha-śramaṇācārya*. Only the title *nirgrantha*, most commonly used for Jaina ascetics, led Dikshit and others following him to assume that this Guhanandi was a Jaina, but the term can apply to Buddhists as well. See Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 541. The other titles, if anything, sound more appropriate to a Buddhist than a Jaina.

19. Bhagwant Sahai, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-76.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

An obvious prototype for the sort of sculptures represented by the terracotta panels at Antichak and Pāhārpur is the stone sculptures on the *jagatī-piṭha* which is all that remains of the temple at Nālandā Site no. 2 (Plate XXXV, fig. 9). Generally ascribed to the seventh century, though I think more specifically late in the seventh century, that is after the famous stuccoes which remain on the *stūpa* of Site no. 3, the sculptures are usually assumed to provide evidence to show that the plinth belonged to a Hindu temple.²¹ But like the Pāhārpur and Antichak terracotta panels, the stone panels of the Nālandā *jagatī* represent mostly flying or dancing figures, that is demigods (*vyantaradevatās*) and only a few images which can be identified as specific Brahmanical deities. On the analogy of the later monuments at Pāhārpur and Antichak, both undoubtedly Buddhist, I am no longer convinced that the temple at Nālandā Site no. 2 was dedicated to a Hindu deity.

The Pāhārpur terracotta figures and especially those of Antichak are notably more formalized and hence, I am quite sure, later in date than the stone sculptures of the Nālandā *jagatī*. If the modelling of the Pāhārpur and Antichak figures does not make clear their later date, then surely the considerably stiffer, more awkward poses of the figures, revealing almost nothing of the fluid movement suggested by the Nālandā figures give clear indication of the later date. At the same time, however, none of the terracottas at either site seems far removed from two dated bronze sculptures of Devapāla's time (c. 818-858 A.D.), a Balarāma from Nālandā, now in the National Museum of India, whose inscription does not specify a regnal year,²² and a Balarāma from Kurkihar, now in the Patna Museum, inscribed in the year 3 of Devapāla's reign.²³ A comparison with the only sculpture I know dated to Dharmapāla's reign, a rather poorly rendered plaque illustrating Sūrya, Śiva, and Viṣṇu, made in the 26th year of his reign,²⁴ is not the least instructive, even though it is ostensibly contemporary with the terracotta panels. The sculpture is not of sufficiently good quality to make any comparison valid. Nevertheless, the fact that the panels at both sites clearly post-date the Nālandā *jagatī* sculptures of the late seventh century and appear to be not far removed from the style of Devapāla's time seems to indicate that they must have been made about the time of Dharmapāla, that is, the time when the *mahāvihāras* of both Vikramaśīla and Somapura were allegedly founded.

One may notice some slight difference between the terracottas of Antichak and those of Pāhārpur. For example, the Pāhārpur terracottas appear to have surfaces which

21. Krishna Deva and V. S. Agrawala, "The Stone Temple at Nalanda," *Journal of the Uttar Pradesh Historical Society*, vol. XXIII, 1950, pp. 198-212. The authors suggest the temple was dedicated to Śiva and further note (p. 201): "This is the same architectural style as we find in the terracotta plaques forming part of the plinth of the grand temple of Paharpur. ...Both in the subjects and style of execution, there is close similarity."

22. R. D. Banerji, *op. cit.*, pl. Ib.

23. P. L. Gupta, *Patna Museum Catalogue of Antiquities*, Patna, 1965, pl. XXXII.

24. R. D. Banerji, *op. cit.*, pl. Ia.

are somewhat more subtly modelled, giving a softer appearance. Even details such as modelled folds on the garment of an archer (Plate XXXV, fig. 11) contrast with the considerably more regular lines used to describe the garment folds of a standing Buddha (Plate XXXIV, fig. 7) from Antichak. However, the differences are not sufficiently great to provide convincing evidence of a difference in date. As for the modelling of the surfaces, the Antichak terracottas are, as already noted, rather roughened by the action of salts, so subtleties of modelling are obliterated. And as for the method of rendering garment folds, that can be explained by the word of a different atelier which handled the clay somewhat differently. But surely upon examining such figures as the dancer between the pot and conch in fig. 4 or the *kimpuruṣa* in fig. 6, it would be difficult to suggest a date later than the beginning of the ninth century for the Antichak terracotta panels, that is the same date generally given to the ones from Pāhārpur.

The panels at Pāhārpur have often been treated as if they represent a sort of folk art, far removed from the mainstream represented by contemporary stone sculpture. For example, S.K. Saraswati has commented, "The most striking fact presented by the Pāhārpur terracottas is that they represent a local and indigenous trend, popular in inspiration and imagination, as well as in appeal."²⁵ And Niharranjan Ray expressed similar views: "The essential nature of the terracotta art of Pāhārpur is wholly popular, and it derives its inspiration from the mind and imagination of simple village folk."²⁶ I would not deny that the vast majority of panels at Pāhārpur and Antichak as well do not depict major deities rendered in accordance with an iconographic text. But it seems misleading, if not erroneous, to relate the sculptures to the unsophisticated mind of a villager, for it is inconceivable that a major monument of the sort at Antichak and Pāhārpur would be adorned with purely folk figures and have popular appeal as its goal. I cannot think of any instance in the history of ancient Indian art which gives certain evidence of a popular trend followed closely paralleling a great tradition. And surely since Maurya and Śuṅga times, terracotta art has followed closely and excellently the stylistic trends of stone sculpture as exemplified by the superb *Devatā* from Tāmralipta now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.²⁷ The style of these sculptures at Pāhārpur and Antichak also parallel closely the style of contemporary stone sculptures, but their subject-matter is dictated more by their position on the monument than their association with any rustic mind. As already noted, we see similar sculptures on the *jagati* of the Nālandā temple, and perhaps serving as a prototype for all these are the frolicking figures in an essentially similar position on rock-cut *stūpas* dateable at least as early as the fifth century. For example, they appear on the *stūpa* in Cave 26 at Ajanta (Plate XXXVI, fig. 12). Here, as elsewhere, these frolicking figures within the panels seem to have their origin in the decorated ends of wooden beams.

25. S. K. Saraswati, *Early Sculpture of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1962, p. 108.

26. R. C. Majumdar, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 527-28.

27. S. K. Saraswati, *op. cit.*, pl. XVI.

Until the great monument at Antichak was revealed, Pāhārpur seemed unique in the South Asian subcontinent, but its specific significance was difficult to understand. However, now with the further evidence of the Antichak monument we are able to determine with greater certainty its original appearance and hence its original purpose and function. At the same time, the site of the Vikramaśīla Mahāvihāra seems to have been identified. In this paper, I have avoided referring to the site as Vikramaśīla only because no inscrip-tional evidence has been unearthed²⁸ to verify what seems quite apparent from other evidence : the location and the relationship with a structure of Dharmapāla's time. And finally, the simultaneous erection of almost identical monuments in Bihar and Bengal further confirms what we already know from other evidence, namely that the region was unified culturally as well as politically. True, some differences in style may be noted, particularly among the terracotta panels, just as there is a difference in the stone sculptures produced by the various ateliers in the Pāla realm. But it is the overriding similarity rather than the subtle distinction which seems more important in understanding the monument and its relationship with others in Eastern India at this time.²⁹

28. The only inscrip-tional evidence is fragmentary and inconclusive ; cf. R. C. Prasad Sinha, "Antichak, The Seat of Vikramaśīlā University," *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, XLVI, (1960), pp. 135-38.

29. [In the illustrations for this article please read 'northeast' in place of 'southwest' in the caption of Plate XXXIII, fig. 5, and 'southwest' in place of 'northeast' in Plate XXXIV, fig. 6.—*Editor.*]

THE ORIGINAL TERRITORY OF HARIKELA

B. N. MUKHERJEE

In a manuscript of the *Rūpacintāmaṇi-koṣa*, completed in the year 1515 of the Śaka Era, Harikela is said to be the name of Śrīhaṭṭa. The reading *Harikeli* appears in place of *Harikela* as the synonym of Śrīhaṭṭa in the *Kalpadrakoṣa*. *Harikola*, apparently a variant of the name *Harikela*, was equated with *Śrīhaṭṭadeśa* by the author of the work called *Kṛtyasāra*.¹ It appears that in the early mediaeval period Śrīhaṭṭa or the modern Sylhet area of Bangladesh was known as Harikela.

Scholars now generally believe, mainly on the basis of the above data that "Harikela primarily denoted the region now known as Sylhet."² There are, however, certain data which militate against this hypothesis.

I-tsing, who was in the Indian subcontinent from c. A.D. 673 to c. A.D. 687, met Wu-hing near Nalanda in the first year of the Ch'ui-king period (A. D. 685).³ According to a well known statement of I-tsing, Wu-hing sailed from Simhala for the north-east and "came to Harikela, which is the eastern limit of Eastern India [Tung T'ien (-chu)] and of Jambudvipa (Chan-pu-chou)."⁴ As Wu-hing disembarked at a place in Harikela, it must have a littoral area within its limits.⁵ And since Harikela formed at least a part of the eastern limit of T'ien-chu, which more or less embraced the whole of Indian subcontinent in the days of I-tsing, the territory in question should have included, in the second half of the seventh century A.D., parts of the south-eastern portion of the region now known as Bangladesh.

I-tsing referred to another territory which can also be located in the south-eastern portion of Bangladesh. According to him, Seng-chi, who came to India in the latter half of the

1. P. L. Paul, *The Early History of Bengal* (henceforth *EHB*), vol. I, pp. iii-iv; *Indian Culture*, vol. XII, pp. 88f; *Indian Historical Quarterly* (henceforth *IHQ*), vol. XX, 1944, pp. 6-7.
2. R. C. Majumdar, *History of Ancient Bengal* (henceforth *HAB*), Calcutta, 1971, p. 9; see also D. C. Sircar in *Journal of the Asiatic Society, Letters* (henceforth *JASL*), vol. XVII, 1951, pp. 89-90; A. M. Chowdhury, *Dynastic History of Bengal* (henceforth *DHB*), Dacca, 1973, p. 152.
3. J. Takakusu (Tr.), *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and Malay Archipelago by I-tsing*, pp. xxxiii, xlvi, liii and lv.
4. E. Chavannes, *Mémoires composés à l'époque de la grande dynastie T'ang sur les religieux éminents qui allaient chercher la loi les pays d'occident*, p. 144.
5. *IHQ*, vol. XX, 1944, p. 2.

7th century A.D., went there “by the southern sea-route and arrived at Samataṭa. The king of the country was Rājabhaṭa.....”⁶ Rājabhaṭa has been identified with Rājarājabhaṭa of the Khaḍga dynasty, which ruled about the latter half of the 7th century A.D. and issued two copper-plates from Karmānta-vāsaka, identifiable with the locality of modern Baḍkāmtā in the Comilla district of Bangladesh.⁷ If these identifications are correct, Samataṭa of the latter half of the 7th century A. D. should have stretched southwards from at least a part of the Comilla district region to the Bay of Bengal. So it included at least parts of the areas now incorporated in the Comilla and the Noakhali districts.

This inference receives support from other sources. The inscription of Sṛidhāraṇa Rāta, which is palaeographically datable to the second half of the 7th century A. D. and which refers to him as the lord of Samataṭa, was found at Kailan in the Comilla district.⁸ Hiuan-tsang, who visited San-mo-ta-t'a (Samataṭa) in the first half of the 7th century A. D., described it as situated “on the sea-side.”⁹ However, as the Chinese pilgrim reached Samataṭa after travelling not more than 1200 or 1300 *li* from Kāmarūpa,¹⁰ the country in question might have included some inland areas as well as the sea-coast.

It appears that in the second half (and perhaps also in the first half) of the 7th century A. D. Samataṭa included parts (if not the whole) of the territory now incorporated in Comilla and Noakhali districts. Hence Harikela, which in the second half of the 7th century A. D. formed the eastern boundary of the Indian subcontinent and was situated on the sea, should be placed to the east or south-east of the Comilla and Noakhali districts. The territory which obviously selects itself is the coastal region of the Chittagong district.

Thus Harikela, as described by I-tsing, in the second half of the 7th century A.D., should have incorporated parts of the littoral areas now in the Chittagong district.

In this connection we may refer to a class of silver coins (Plate XXXVII, figs. 1-2) bearing a recumbent bull to left or right with or without a wreath around its neck on the obverse, and a tripartite symbol (looking like a trident) with garlands hanging from it on each side and having representations of sun and moon above it on the reverse. Both the obverse and reverse devices appear within a circle, outside which is a circular beaded border of dots. The obverse bears a legend, which has been variously read as

6. S. Beal, *The Life of Hiuen-tsiang by Shaman Hwui-li*, pp. xl-xli.

7. *Epigraphia Indica* (henceforth *EI*), vol. XVII, pp. 357-359; *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, N. S. vol. X, p. 87; *HAB*, pp. 78-79; *DHB*, p. 141.

8. *IHQ*, vol. XXIII, 1947, pp. 221-224.

9. T. W. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, vol. II, London, 1905 p. 187.

10. *Ibid.*

Yari kriya, *Yāri kriya*, *Harikoṣa*, *Carikoṣa*, *Parikeṣa*, etc.¹¹ But inscription on at least some of these coins should be read as *Harikela* or *Harikelā*.¹² Similar forms of *ha*, *ka* and *la* can be noticed in *inter alia* a stone inscription (Plate XXXVIII, fig. 3) found in the Sandoway district of Arakan (Burma). This epigraph has been palaeographically dated to the 7th century A.D.¹³ Some of the coins under discussion may then be dated to about the same period. Several other coins, of this group, inscriptions on which show more developed palaeographic and other features,¹⁴ may be dated to a later period or periods.

Stylistically, typologically and metrologically these silver specie must be related to the silver coins of the Candra dynasty of Arakan.¹⁵ This dynasty ruled from about the middle or third quarter of the 4th century to sometime of the 8th century with a possible interregnum in the 6th-7th century.¹⁶

The original strikers of the series of coins under discussion seem to have been inspired by the Arakan coinage. And since the Candra coins of Arakan are not known to have ever been in regular circulation anywhere to the east or north-east of Arakan, they could have at best influenced the mint-masters of a contiguous territory to its east and north-east like the Chittagong region. Some of the coins in question might then have been minted in the area now included in the Chittagong district. These, as indicated above, can be dated to c. 7th century A.D. Hence the legend *Harikela* on them suggests the existence of a kingdom called Harikela in the territory of the Chittagong district during c. 7th century A. D.¹⁷

In this connection we may refer to the copper-plate of Kāntideva, discovered at Chittagong. The document, inscribed on the plate, was addressed to the "future rulers" of Harikelā-ṃaṇḍala.¹⁸ If the inscription was discovered at or near the original place of its deposition,¹⁹ the Chittagong town area could have been, at the time of the issue of the document

11. *Numismatic Chronicle* (henceforth *NC*), 1960, pp. 229-230; *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India* (henceforth *JNSI*), vol. XXIV, 1962, pp. 141-142.
12. *NC*, 1960, pl. XVI, nos. 4, 5 and 7; V. A. Smith, *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta* (henceforth *CCIM*), vol. I, p. 332, nos. 2 and 6, pl. XXXI, no. 10.
13. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (henceforth *BSOAS*), vol. XI, 1946, pp. 361-362 and 383 and pl. IV, fig. 2; See A. H. Dani, *Indian Palaeography*, Oxford, 1963, pl. XXIIa, 1. 3 for an identical form of *ka* noticeable in epigraphic material discovered at Hmawza.
14. *CCIM*, vol. I, p. 332, nos. 3 and 5.
15. A. P. Phyre, *Coins of Arakan, Pegu and Burma*, p. 30 and pl. II, fig. 11; *BSOAS*, vol. XI, 1946, p. 383-384 and relevant plate; *NC*, 1960, pl. XVI.
16. *BSOAS*, vol. XI, 1946, pp. 368f; *EI*, vol. XXVII, p. 64 and vol. XXXII, p. 108.
17. Some of these coins have been found in the Sylhet district. These might have reached this area through trade and commerce.
18. *EI*, vol. XXVI, p. 316.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 314; but see also *IHQ*, vol. XX, 1944, p. 5.

within the limits of Harikelā-maṇḍala or an administrative division called Harikela. The epigraph can be dated, on palaeographic grounds, to c. 9th century A. D.²⁰ Hence the Chittagong region might possibly have been within Harikela in the 9th century A. D.

In Hui-lin's *Glossary*, completed in A. D. 817, *Samataṭa*, *Ho-lai-kai-lo*, and *Tāmra-lipta* were placed near Kāmarūpa.²¹ The term *Ho-lai-kai-lo* might have been a transliteration of the name *Harikela*. It is, however, not clear whether *Ho-lai-kai-lo*, as mentioned in the *Glossary* embraced only an inland territory or a littoral area or both.

Trailokyacandra of the Candra family of south-eastern Bangladesh, who ruled in the second half of the 9th and/or in the first half of the 10th century A. D., was described in the Rampal copper-plate inscription of his son Śricandra as one who was the 'mainstay' of the royal family of Harikela and who became the king of Candradvīpa.²² He was, according to the Mainamati copper plates of Laḍahacandra, like "a string of pearls of Vaṅga."²³ Authority of his successors over parts of the territories generally included in Vaṅga and Samataṭa²⁴ is indicated by the provenances and contents of their inscriptions.²⁵ The extension of their rule to the Sylhet region is suggested by the Sylhet plate of Trailokyacandra's son Śricandra, which records the grant of land in Śrihaṭṭa-maṇḍala.²⁶ Śricandra's great-grandson Govindacandra, who ruled in the first half of the 11th century A. D., was referred to as Govindacandra of 'Vangāla-deśa' in the Tirumalai inscription of Rajendra Cola.²⁷

It appears that the family of Trailokyacandra rose to supreme power from the position of a subordinate status in Harikela. As the Candras expanded their sphere of influence and rule from their base in Harikela, the name *Harikela* perhaps became associated with the region of Vaṅga, etc. Harikela might have incorporated the Sylhet area by the time of Śricandra. This hypothesis of the expansion of the connotation of the name Harikela explains why Yādavaprakāśa, who lived probably in the 11th century, and Hemacandra, a lexicographer of the 11th-12th century, identified Harikela with Vaṅga.²⁸

20. *EI*, vol. XXVI, p. 314.

21. *Journal of the Greater India Society*, vol. XV, 1956, p. 9.

22. *EI*, vol. XII, p. 141.

23. *DHB*, p. 160, f. n. 2.

24. *HAB*, pp. 8-9.

25. *DHB*, pp. 176-177.

26. *N. K. Bhattasali Commemoration Volume*, ed. by A.B.M. Habibullah, Dacca, 1966 pp. 169f.

27. *EI*, vol. IX, pp. 229f; *HAB*, p. 133.

28. *Yādavaprakāśa, Vaijayantī, Hemacandra, Abhidhāna-Cintāmaṇi*, v. 957 (*bhūmi-kāṇḍa*). In this connection see also *EHB*, vol. I, p. iii; H. C. Raychaudhuri, *Studies in Indian Antiquities* (2nd ed), pp. 268-69; *IHQ*, vol. XIX, 1943, pp. 214 and 218.

We have already indicated that several coins bearing the legend *Harikela*, may be placed, on palaeographic grounds, to some time after 7th century A. D. We are not sure whether some of these were struck during the rule of the Candras.²⁹

It appears, as it has already been suggested, boundaries of Harikela "underwent changes in course of centuries."³⁰ The reason was the expansion of the territory of Harikela under different rulers.³¹ If the dates of the available data are of any indication about the development of the geographical connotation of the name *Harikela*, then it should be taken to denote originally an area now included in the Chittagong district of Bangladesh.

Harikela might not have originally included the Sylhet region. The name of Harikela was applied to this area probably by or during the time of Śricandra, who had under him Śrihaṭṭa as well as the territory earlier included in Harikela.³²

29. In this connection see also *JNSI*, vol. XXIV, 1962, pp. 141-142.

30. *HAB*, p. 9.

31. *JASL*, vol. XVII, 1951, pp. 89-90.

32. In a map of Central Asia and India published in Japan in A. D. 1710 Harikela was shown to have comprised the coastal land between Samataṭa and Orissa. (For the map see vol. II of S. Julien's translation of the *Si-yu-chi*). This map was claimed to have been prepared on the basis of information given by the accounts of Hiuan-tsang and Fa-hien. But obviously the data supplied by the Chinese sources were wrongly interpreted by cartographers concerned (see above for our interpretation of the relevant Chinese evidence).

HUNTING : ON THE TERRACOTTA TEMPLES OF LATE MEDIAEVAL BENGAL

ZULEKHA HAQUE

The late mediaeval terracotta temples (16th-19th centuries A. D.) of Bangladesh and the Indian province of West Bengal portray in their numerous plaques not only religious or mythological stories but various activities of the contemporary society as well.¹ As a rule, the panels containing scenes of secular character run along the base of the walls and pillars, though single plaques portraying similar scenes are sometimes found higher up on the side-walls. Terracotta portrayals of secular activities of the people of different groups and classes of the then society, present a visual evidence of the condition of late mediaeval Bengal which is of immense value to a student of history. Of the various recreational activities depicted by the terracotta artists, hunting seems to be the most popular, which occurs in numerous panels on the temple-walls all over the region.

While discussing the terracotta plaques portraying hunting, it must be noted that it has been depicted as a pastime and activity of leisure of the moneyed people only. We find almost no representation of the life of those people — the *Śavaras* — to whom hunting was not a mere sport but a necessity, a means of livelihood. It seems curious when we remember the depictions of various aspects of the lives of these very people, belonging to the lowest strata of the society, which were portrayed in the medium of terracotta on the 8th-9th century Buddhist temple at Paharpur.² But only one panel on the *Jorbānglā* temple at Vishnupur (Plate XXXIX, fig. 1), shows a tiger-hunt, where two hunters are depicted taking part in the different stages of the hunt in a jungle. They do not seem to belong to the upper class as indicated by their simple dress of short *dhoti* and turban.

The plaques on the late mediaeval temples depict various types of hunting and hunters who are either in large parties (Plates XXXIX, figs. 2 & 3 ; XL, fig. 4) or in small groups containing not more than two or three figures (Plates XL, figs. 5 & 6 ; XLI, fig. 8). The well dressed and well equipped hunters, usually mounted on horses or elephants,

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1. For detailed study of terracotta plaques see Zulekha Haque, *The Study of Social and Religious Life as Depicted on the Terracotta Decorations of Late Mediaeval Bengal*, B. Litt. Thesis, Oxford, 1973.
 2. K. N. Dikshit, *Excavations at Paharpur, Bengal*, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, no. 55. Delhi, 1938, pl. XLIX, fig. a-f.

are also accompanied by foot-soldiers or *pāiks*, who at the successful conclusion of the hunt carry the game tied to poles, as seen on the Kālī temple at Baranagar. Here a leopard is shown attacking the leading elephant by leaping up to hold its trunk. The rider in the *howdāh* is preparing to shoot at it. The animal seems to have frightened the hunter behind, who is seen jumping up on the horse with alarm. It is interesting to note that without putting a dividing line, the same panel shows the return of the party with its prey carried by the *pāiks*. The separation of the events in time has been effectively achieved by turning the figures to face the other way round. That such an attack on hunters was not an unusual event in tiger-hunt has been indicated by T. Williamson who recounted a few incidents of this nature taking place in early 19th century Bengal.³

On the base of the *Pañca-ratna* temple at Puthia, two interesting hunting scenes have been depicted. The game in one case is a deer and in the other a tiger. In both the panels the animals are placed at the centre but, curiously, they have been depicted as standing upon their hind legs. Two hunters on horse-back have been placed on either side of the animals armed with spears in the scene of the deer, and with sword in that of the tiger. Two hunting dogs are also depicted by the side of the horses, showing that they were employed.

Dogs appear almost in every hunting scene. Whether they were just pet dogs or specially trained ones, cannot be clearly identified. But as the customs of the Mughal court were likely to influence the habits and practices of the nobility, it seems likely that hunting dogs were usually taken along. Hunting dogs and falcons were imported from distant lands like Persia to facilitate royal huntings during emperor Jahāngīr's reign.⁴ A beautifully executed plaque showing such dogs is to be found on the Mathurapur Deul at Faridpur.⁵ It shows two large dogs straining at the leash, held by a well dressed man, in order to run after the fleeing animals. Figures of such long-eared dogs, bearing resemblance to the greyhounds, appear in many of the panels showing hunting scenes, such as, the base panel on the southern wall of the Kantanagar temple (Plate XXXIX, fig. 2), the *Pañca-ratna* temple at Puthia (Plate XXXIX, fig. 3), etc. One such clear portrayal may be seen on a plaque in the Asutosh Museum collection (Plate XL, fig. 5), where a dog is helping the rider to hunt a deer by biting at its leg. A group of men armed with guns and accompanied by four hunting dogs as depicted on the Radha-Govinda temple at Antpur (Plate XLI, fig. 9) give another clear indication of this practice.

Falcons or hawks have been portrayed quite prominently in many of the hunting scenes, showing the adaptation of falconry by the members of the upper class of Bengal.

3. T. Williamson, *Oriental Field-sports*, vol. I, London, 1808, pp. 266-69.

4. Asok Das, "Mughal Royal Hunt in Miniature Painting", *Indian Museum Bulletin*, vol. II, no. 1, 1967, p. 19.

5. G. S. Dutt, "Bengali Terracottas", *JISOA*, vol. VI, 1938, pl. XXXIX, fig. 3.

Hawking as a pastime was popular with almost every Mughal ruler and we come across many paintings portraying different emperors and princes hunting with hawks. Emperor Bābar has been shown resting after a hunt, with his falcon perched on a decorated rail by his side in a 17th century painting illustrating his memoirs.⁶ Jahāngīr, who took up hunting from an early age, was a great patron of falconry. Falcons were reared, trained and looked after by separate employces under guidance of the chief falconer, supervised by the *Mir-i-Shikār*.⁷ In a miniature of 1618, Jahāngīr has been portrayed holding a *darbār* with a falcon perched on his fingers.⁸ Shihābuddin Mirzā Nathan has left a good account of a hunt undertaken by Shāhjahān (then prince Khurram), during his rebellious occupation of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, towards the end of his father's reign, in which "he enjoyed the sights of kills effected by hawks, falcons, panthers, etc."⁹

Falconry became very popular throughout the Mughal court and the practice must have continued in the succeeding centuries. For, in various paintings of the late Mughal period, we come across scenes of hawking or portraits of nobles with falcons in their hands. One such painting is an early 18th century portrait, identified as that of Amānat Khān, the general, under Aurangzīb, now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.¹⁰ Another painting in the same collection, showing hawking, is said to be portraying Jahāndar Shāh and Bahrūr Banū.¹¹ That falcons continued to be admired, reared and trained by the gentry in the following periods as well, is indicated by a painting of either late 18th or early 19th century, which shows a person seated on a terrace smoking a *huqqa* and addressing his falconer before him.¹² That the practice of falconry was not restricted to the areas under the direct influence of the royal courts alone, but spread quite well to the interior of the provinces is amply proved by a number of terracotta plaques with falcons displayed prominently in them.

On the Kantanagar temple alone we come across no less than six separate plaques showing falcons perched on the hands of the hunters. In some of them, it is being carried by the well dressed rider himself as in Plates XXXIX, fig. 2 and XLI, fig. 10. In others, it is being carried by his following attendant as in Plates XLI, fig. 8 and XLII, fig. 11. Nowhere the falcon has been shown in action, but always perched on the hand. On the western wall of the temple a rider on a big decorated horse has a falcon in one hand and a bow in the other (Plate XLI, fig. 8). He is followed by various attendants on foot, one of whom is holding a second falcon. A plaque on the southern

6. Ernst Kuhnlel, *Mughal Malerei*. Berlin, 1955, p. 9, pl. 1.

7. *Tūzuk-i-Jahāngīrī*, Eng. tr. by A. Rogers, vol. I, London, 1909, p. 369.

8. Ernst Kuhnlel, *Indische Miniaturen*, Berlin, 1946, pl. 3.

9. Mirzā Nathan, *Bahāristān-i-Ghāybi*, Eng. tr. by M. I. Borah, Gauhati, 1936, pp. 773-775.

10. A. K. Coomaraswami, *Catalogue of the Indian Collection in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts*, part VI, pl. LVIII.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 65, pic. no. 07.289, not reproduced.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 78, pic, no. 15.80, not reproduced.

wall also shows a large group of hunters riding horses, camel and elephant, one of whom is holding a falcon in his hand and excitedly turning round (Plate XXXIX, fig. 2).

Falcons have also found a place in a different medium of art of the contemporary period. A figured *Bālucar sādī* of the 18th century shows in its border a continual design of a noble wearing a turban commonly worn by Mughal princes, sitting in an arched balcony, and holding a falcon in his left hand.¹³ A. Ghosh has suggested that it may represent emperor Jahāngīr. Whether one agrees with it or not, there is no doubt that the craftsman reproduced a practice which was favourite among his patrons, the members of the affluent class.

Hunting as a pastime was of course not restricted to the native aristocrats only. The Europeans, who had appeared on the scene for various purposes, found great pleasure in hunting expeditions. This formed a major theme in the embroidered quilts of the 17th century, which were made and exported by the Europeans, especially by the Portuguese. Here they are shown taking part in hunts. Some of them are riding on horses and some on foot. They are either going after herds of deer or shooting down lions and, occasionally, birds.¹⁴ Curiously enough, one embroidered rounded quilt has the depiction of a rider shooting at a monkey on a tree.¹⁵ This animal does not appear to have ever been a prey of the Bengali hunters, possibly because of the tradition which makes it a devotee of Rāma, one of the incarnations of Viṣṇu.

Amongst the terracotta plaques of our period we find a few portraying the Europeans engaged in such activity. One such scene on the southern wall of the Kantanagar temple deserves special mention (Plate XLII, fig. 12). Here two hunters wearing trousers, frock-coats, hats and shoulder-length hair are shown shooting down a large animal with guns. The animal with scale-like markings on its body, hooves and a short tail and possibly with a single horn on its forehead, does not bear similarity to any known kind. Its head is more like a bear but it may possibly be an attempt by the artist to portray a wild boar, the hunting of which was a favourite pastime of the Europeans as witnessed by Williamson.¹⁶ Besides guns in their hands, the hunters are also displayed with curved powder flasks in the shape of horns hanging from their waistbands. Their costumes exhibit a strange mixture of Indian and European ideas of dress. This may be due to the inability of the artist to observe the subjects from close proximity or they may have copied some earlier illustrations. But no such mistake has been committed in the portrayals on the early 19th century temple at Tilandpara in Midnapore, where two plaques may be seen depicting two European riders hunting with bayonets. The prey in one of them seems to be a leopard (Plate XLII, fig. 13)

13. Ajit Ghosh, "Figured Fabrics of Old Bengal"; *Marg*, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 39.

14. John Irwin, "Indo-Portuguese Embroideries of Bengal", *Art and Letters*, vol. XXVI, no. 2, London, 1952, pls. 2, 3, 4.

15. *Ibid.*, pl. 16.

16. T. Williamson, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 61-91.

who has fallen under the horse and is about to be pierced by the bayonet. The purpose of the face peeping in the background is not clear. In the other plaque the hunter is about to kill a deer. In both the representations the vigorous and strong postures of the horses are noteworthy. Another execution of European hunters worth mentioning is found on the Dāmodar temple at Amaragari in Howrah (Plate XLII, fig. 14). It portrays three hunters, one on foot and the other two riding horses and hunting down a tiger with spears. The agony of pain of the dying animal has been portrayed with great skill.

The animals that have been shown as prey in the hunting scenes are mainly the common games which are still hunted throughout the country. Tigers, herds of deer, leopards and occasionally rhinoceros have been portrayed. Amongst them, the tigers with their striped bodies and large round heads have been depicted in most of the scenes and they certainly represent the Royal Bengal Tiger, whose grace and ferociousness have earned the respect and awe of the hunters through the ages (Plates XXXIX, fig. 1, XL, fig. 4 & XLII, fig. 14). On the Kantanagar temple a plaque portrays the ferocious attack of such a tiger. It is about to break the neck of a horse, the rider of which is striking the animal with a sword while two other *pāiks* are attacking it with bows and arrows, and swords (Plate XL, fig. 6). As mentioned earlier, the southern wall of the *Jorbānglā* temple at Vishnupur has a panel showing another tiger-hunt which is being done on foot by two hunters with sword and spear (Plate XXXIX, fig. 1). One of them seems to have climbed a tree from where he has struck the death blow. Tigers and deer are the animals which seem to have been portrayed with the greatest realism and ease possibly because the village artists could watch them more frequently from close quarter than the others and also could study them at first hand. The Mathurapur Deul of Faridpur, the *Pañca-ratna* temple at Puthia (Plate XXXIX, fig. 3), the *Jorbānglā* temple at Vishnupur and the plaques in the Asutosh Museum collection (Plate XL, fig. 5), give excellent renderings of deer-hunts, where the sense of movement, emotion and panic of the fleeing deer seem to have been fully captured by the observant artists.¹⁷

The other wild animal, which has been shown as prey in quite a few scenes, is the leopard. One must admire the grace with which these swiftly moving animals have been brought to life within such a limited space. Their habit of jumping up and ferociously attacking the vulnerable points of their victims have been depicted in various plaques, such as those on the Kālī temple and the Jānakīballava Jiu temple at Tilandpara.

Beside these easily recognizable animals, we also come across two other kinds, where the imagination of the artist had to be stretched far, to portray these creatures which the artists either had never seen for themselves or did not have the opportunity to observe in detail. The animals in question are possibly meant to be wild boars. The Govinda temple at Puthia has a panel which shows a large hunting party consisting of the usual elephant and horse riders. They are following an animal with a large head and a short tail having markings resembling woolly-knots all over its body. The

17. G. S. Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. xxxviii.

Kantanagar temple also depicts two scenes containing hunters, who are attacking two animals with the same scaly body (Plate XLII, fig. 12). It is interesting to note that though these animals on the Kantanagar temple are obviously wild, they have got saddle-cloth on their backs. This seems to follow the tradition of the Bengali folk artists, who cannot resist the urge to put such decorative insignia even where they are not necessary. It is difficult to say with certainty what animals they represent. It is possible that they are purely imaginary and mythical. But if they did represent any known species of animals, it is the boar that resembles them most. Especially some of the drawings by Samuel Howlett in Thomas Williamson's book illustrating boar or hog-hunts, remind us of portrayals in terracotta which may be bad attempts to depict such animals.¹⁸

In the long panel on the Govinda temple at Puthia, an unmistakable scene of a rhinoceros hunt has been depicted (Plate XLI, fig. 7). Not only the portrayal of the animal, but the manner of the hunt is interesting as well. The party is a large one comprising, beside elephants and horse riders, a noble smoking in a palanquin and few armed retainers. A rider and a retainer are killing a tiger while a deer is fleeing. The *mahout* of the elephant is hurling a spear at the rhino, possibly in an attempt to make a dent in its armour-plate-like hide, while a *pāik* is shown lying on the ground with a raised spear in his hand. Either he has been felled by the rhinoceros or is trying to hurt it by piercing the underbelly of the animal. The scene is full of bustle and activity, but the most interesting object in the plaque is the animal itself. It has been depicted in the form of large scaly pieces of hide overlapping one another. It seems almost like layers of huge shields put on top of one another. The horn, instead of protruding from its nose, has been shown springing up from its forehead in the manner of the unicorn. The Gaṅgeśvara Śiva temple at Baranagar also has a plaque at the base of a pillar which shows a rhinoceros and possibly a tiger attacking three hunters. Here also the animal has been portrayed in the similar manner but the horn has been put on the nose. This animal itself is not unknown in the eastern part of India and even in the recent past, jungles of Assam have produced rhinoceros. Emperor Jahāngīr, while recording his exploits in the field of sport, very proudly states in *Tūzuk-i-Jahāngīrī*, how he shot and killed rhinoceros.¹⁹ Williamson has discussed briefly the habits and whereabouts of this animal which, according to him, were to be found in the jungles of Midnapur, Dinajpur, etc. So the animal portrayed in the plaques, though rare, was not altogether unknown to the people of Bengal and its difficult portrayal has been done with imagination and ingenuity.

The hunting parties contained not only the chief hunters riding on horses, elephants or being carried in palanquins (Plates XXXIX, figs. 2 & 3 ; XL, fig. 4 ; XLII, fig. 11) but also armed retainers or *pāiks* who acted as guards and helpers as well. Beside them, some of the plaques contain trumpeteers blowing *śīngās* and *pāṅkhā-bardārs* with large fans (Plates XL, fig. 6 ; XLI, figs. 8 & 10), the shapes of which are similar to the palm-leaf fans commonly used in the villages even today. The fans portrayed in such a hunting scene on the Dulgram temple in Jessore, are noticeably large in size.

18. T. Williamson, *op. cit.*, pl. 3, 5.

19. *Tūzuk-i-Jahāngīrī*, vol. I, pp. 191 and 368-9 ; and vol. II, London, 1914, p. 197.

A SWORD OF NAWĀB SIRĀJ-UD-DAULAH IN THE DACCA MUSEUM

FIROZ MAHMUD

The Dacca Museum has in its collection a sword with the name of Nawāb Sirāj-ud-daulah inscribed in Arabic on the blade (Plate XLIII, fig. 1a). This sword, now bearing the Dacca Museum accession no. B1752, was formerly in the collection of the Baldha Museum which does not exist now, all its collections having been transferred to the Dacca Museum in February, 1963.

We do not know whence and how the Baldha Museum acquired this sword. In fact, the said Museum had no record as to the source of the collection, and even if there was any record at all it is no longer available to us. However, the sword is reported to have been acquired from Murshidabad.

The sword may be described as follows :

The overall length of the sword is $42\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

The hilt is $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches long. The grip, 4 inches long, is tubular, made of steel but covered with ivory, the ivory covering being slightly damaged now and consequently part of the steel plate exposed. The top of the tubular grip is rolled forward, and the forward-curved part forming the pommel is capped with steel, and there is a small ring on the capped pommel. The quillons forming the guard in the shape of a straight, slim crossbar are tipped with small knobs. The quillons are $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches long, formed of a piece with the ecusson which is a simple lozenge set lengthwise. The quillons and ecusson are of a separate piece of steel, not of one piece with the grip and pommel.

The blade, 37 inches long, is straight not with parallel but with tapered edges. It has three shallow grooves. Though double-edged, it is sharp entirely on one side only, the other side being mostly blunt with only the upper part of the foible being edged. The weaker edge is little thicker. The tip is not so sharp-pointed. The blade is $1\frac{5}{8}$ inches wide at the most. On one face of the blade near the root is an incised inscription in Arabic, giving the name of Nawāb Sirāj-ud-daulah (Plate XLIII, fig. 2). The inscription was tinged with gold, much of it having disappeared now. On the other face of the blade is another inscription.¹

1. لا فتا الا على لا سيف الا ذوالنقار
نصر من الله وفتح قريش و بشر المؤمنين
قاله خير حافظاً و هو ارحم الراحمين

Translation : There is no young man except 'Alī and there is no sword except Zūlfīqār ('Alī and Zūlfīqār mentioned in the inscription, refer to Hazrat 'Alī, the fourth caliph of Islam, and his

This inscription (Plate XLIII, fig. 3) was also done in Arabic by incision but not tinged with gold. It is now black-filled probably being heated just as the greater part of the other inscription. There is yet another inscription which occurs, curiously enough, on the blunt surface of the weaker edge. This inscription is now illegible, much of it having been worn out.

This sword is a *Firangī* with hilt of pure Persian form. Literally the word *Firangī* means the Portuguese, or foreigner. When the name is applied to a weapon, it denotes a Maratha cut-and-thrust, straight-bladed sword.² The blades of *Firangīs* were imported from Europe by the Portuguese.³ Broadsword blades with either three or four shallow grooves were the most common, but rapier blades were also used.⁴ Most of the *Firangī* blades are of the seventeenth century though some are of the sixteenth.⁵ The hilt of a *Firangī* is usually of the *Khāṇḍā* type, with broad guard and finger guard (knuckle-bow), and a discoidal pommel with a curved spike on it (Plate XLIII, fig. 1b). A *Firangī* is then a sword formed of the Indian hilt and the European blade. The present sword is, however, formed of the Persian hilt and the European blade. Although the hilt of the sword in question is of pure Persian form, yet it can be called a *Firangī* after the blade since it is for the blade that this nomenclature has been adopted. That this form of hilt was mounted on a *Firangī* is indeed very unusual. In our present study we will try to assign a definite date to the sword in question on stylistic grounds.

Our contention that the hilt of the sword under treatment is typical of Persia, deserves to be explained first. This form of hilt seems to have been much characteristic of almost all swords in use in Persia from the twelfth down to the seventeenth century as is evident from numerous miniature paintings.⁶ There are various variants of the form, but the basic type is clearly recognizable on all swords of Persian origin, variation occurring only in the shape and design of the pommel without any recognizable change in the tubular form of the grip, a pair of long straight quillons of a piece with the characteristic lozenge-shaped ecusson, however, always being present as an essential element in common use in sword-manufacture in Persia.

sword known as *Zūlfīqār* respectively). Help is from Allah and triumph is near at hand ; and [O Muhammad (Sm.)] convey the believers the good tidings. Allah is the best protector and He is the most benevolent and compassionate.

2. George Cameron Stone, *A Glossary of the Construction, Decoration and Use of the Arms and Armour in All Countries and in All Times*, New York, 1961, p. 229 ; Frederick Wilkinson, *Antique Arms and Armour*, London, 1972, p. 134.
3. George Cameron Stone, *op. cit.*, p. 229.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. E. Blochet, *Musulman Painting XIth-XVIIth Century*, London, 1929, Plates XLI, XLVI, LXV, LXXIII, LXXIV, LXXV, LXXVIII, LXXIX, XCIX, CIV, CXV, CXXIV, CXXVIII, CXXXI, CLXXXV, CLXXXVII and CLXXXVIII ; Basil Gray, "An Unknown Fragment of the *Jāmi al-Tawārikh* in the Asiatic Society of Bengal," in *Ars Orientalis*, vol. I, 1954, plate 3, fig. 15, plate 9, figs. 17 and 18, plate 11, figs. 21 and 22, and plate 42, fig. 24 ; A. J. Arberry (ed.), *The Legacy of Persia*, Oxford, 1953, plates 44 and 45.

Broadly speaking, the pure Persian form of hilt is characterised by the following :

- (i) The grip is tubular as opposed to the grip of a flattened round section, the latter being known as the Indo-Muslim type.
- (ii) The top of the tubular grip is always rolled forward, sometimes to form a bulb which is often capped with steel, and sometimes to terminate in the shape of an animal-head, usually a lion-head. It may be mentioned here that whatever the shape of the pommel is, whether bulb-shaped or animal-headed, it, no doubt, stands in sharp contrast to the discoidal pommel of the Indo-Muslim hilt.
- (iii) The quillons are long straight as opposed to the short quillons usually characteristic of the Indo-Muslim hilt. The long straight quillons are always with the lozenge-shaped ecusson, and this lozenge-shaped ecusson is clearly opposed to the seating processes or the prongs of the Indo-Muslim hilt. The quillons and ecusson are always of a separate piece of steel whereas the quillons and seating processes of the Indo-Muslim hilt are but of one piece with the grip and pommel even though the hilt is sometimes known to have been made of several pieces of iron brazed together. The long straight quillons on a Persian sword actually form the guard which looks like a straight, slim crossbar. The quillons terminate in small bulbs or balls or knobs or fleurets or acorns or downward-scrolled tips.

In our present study it is necessary to understand how the pure Persian form of hilt came into use in India and how it was Indianized in the hands of Indian swordsmiths. The Mughals had a considerable veneer of Persian culture. That in the sphere of arms Persian models were closely imitated admits of no doubt. The Mughals imported Persian swordsmiths and Persian blades. The swords in use with the Mughal nobility until about the third quarter of the sixteenth century, were no doubt mounted with hilts of pure Persian form, the blades being Persian originals. By the end of the sixteenth century the Mughals had successfully diffused Persian techniques among native swordsmiths. Eventually there was a blending of the foreign and indigeneous types, for, after all, the native swordsmiths had enough imagination to make modifications in the hilt. The fusion of the Islamic and Indian types produced the Indo-Muslim type while side by side the pure Persian form also persisted. There is a painting from a manuscript of the history of the Mongols by Rashīd al-Dīn, now in the Pozzi Collection in Paris.⁷ It was the work of three Hindu artists as mentioned in the lower part of the picture, and it was drawn in Delhi in the late sixteenth century. The swords represented in this painting fall under two standard types, one suggesting the pure Persian form and the other the Indo-Muslim type. So this painting supports our above contention that towards the close of the

7. E. Blochet, *op. cit.*, plate CLXXXV.

sixteenth century the pure Persian form still persisted while the Indo-Muslim type was asserting. The former, however, did not survive beyond the sixteenth century A. D. That the Indo-Muslim hilt became popular and was in common use is well evident not only from the numerous representations of swords in painting but also from many actual weapons that have survived, some of which are even reliably dated.

As there is no evidence in India of hilts of pure Persian form being constructed later than the sixteenth century, the sword in question must be assigned to the late sixteenth century. We have already said that most of the *Firangī* blades are of the seventeenth century though some are of the sixteenth. The blade of the present sword is undoubtedly of the late sixteenth century, not of the seventeenth, since the hilt mounted on it cannot be the work of the seventeenth century for the reasons already explained. There are, of course, swords with hilts of pure Persian form that are dateable to the seventeenth century, but these swords are all *Shamshirs* (Plate, XLIII fig. 1c for example) which were all manufactured in all probability in Persia and then imported into India. The Dacca Museum has in its collection several such swords. P. S. Rawson refers to one now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.⁸

While in our present study the date that we have finally assigned to the sword under treatment is the late sixteenth century, should we accept, on the strength of the inscription, that the sword was really of Nawāb Sirāj-ud-daulah? We cannot rule out the possibility of a sixteenth-century sword being used in the mid-eighteenth century and for that matter being inscribed long after it was made. We can here refer to a sword now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.⁹ It is the sword of Murad V, Sultan of Turkey for less than a year in 1876.¹⁰ The blade of this sword was forged in Persia in 1688.¹¹ So here is a concrete example of a blade of the late seventeenth century being used ostensibly in the late nineteenth.

Our contention, therefore, runs as follows: Just as the hilt cannot deceive the eye as to the provenance of the blade and *vice versa*, so the inscription bearing the name of Nawāb Sirāj-ud-daulah cannot deceive an art historian as to the date of the sword. It is much older than the person whose name it bears. Stylistically it cannot belong to Nawāb Sirāj-ud-daulah's time. Its association with him is based only upon the inscription, the genuineness of which is again subject to scrutiny. That the name was inscribed without the date and without any sign of royalty, particularly without the date, leads one not to feel very happy about the authenticity of the inscription.

8. P. S. Rawson, *The Indian Sword*, London, 1968, plate 3; Victoria and Albert Museum Accession no. 237-1950 (I. S.).

9. The sword being referred to is a gift of Giulia P. Morosini to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Accession no. 23. 232. 9.

10. *Guide to the Collections: Arms and Armour*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1968, p. 28.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

RECENT ART & ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS FROM TAMLUK¹

SANTOSH KUMAR BOSE

Tamluk or ancient Tāmralipta region is well known for its antiquity and rich cultural heritage. Its nearness to the sea enabled it to maintain meaningful cultural contacts with far-off Mediterranean coasts, ancient cultures of Western Asia and the countries of ancient South-East Asia. Its connection with the interior of the Indian sub-continent was much facilitated by its situation on ancient waterway linked with the estuarine regions of South Bengal coasts and the water-courses and rivers serving it.

Hitherto Tāmralipta came to be recognised only as a centre noted for antiquities belonging to the early historic period. But the most recent finds from this area point to a continuous occupation since the pre-historic times. The recently discovered pre-historic and proto-historic finds include various interesting objects. Among the lithic artifacts we are much impressed by the occurrence of different types of microlithic tools like blades, graters, points, etc. A sizable number of small to medium-sized neolithic celts are also recovered from the neighbourhood. The chalcolithic character of some finds is again underlined by the presence of typical fragments of bronze-bar-celts. Bone awls, fishing-hooks, bone-made barbed harpoon types are also remarkable. It must be noted that many of the artifacts and antiquities belonging to this group are recovered from Amritberia and Ichhapur areas of modern Tamluk town.

The cultural horizon of the pre-historic period in Tamluk region is then illumined by recent discoveries bringing to light a staggering number of ancient potteries and potsherds. They are mainly of two basic types : red and black on red wares of the late proto-historic ages. Potteries of black and red variety and potteries decorated with significant translucent decorative designs in white colour are also found here. Other pottery-finds from this site show the presence of the characteristic N. B. P. wares, some of which have letters of Brāhmī script inscribed on them.

1. Recently Tāmralipta Museum and Research Centre has been remarkably successful in assembling a large number of surface-finds from Tamluk region. The art-objects and antiquities cited and discussed in the present report are mainly collected by the enthusiastic group of youngmen attached to the Tamluk Museum. Among this batch of young explorers and investigators the field work done by Sri Lakshman Chandra Pradhan, Sri Asutosh Maity, Sri Prasanta Kumar Mandol and Sri Kamal Kumar Kundu deserve special mention. Prof. Sengupta, Head of the Department of History, Tamluk College, constantly encouraged these youngmen in all organisational aspects of museum work.

Beads of a bewildering variety and richness form a substantial section of the archaeological treasures of Tamluk. They mainly belong to the early historic periods. Agate, cornelian, rock-crystal and other semi-precious varieties of stones were used in making these beautiful beads. Globular beads with central hole, flat circular beads with a central perforation, banded beads, etched beads, beads with incised decorations, beads having cylindrical form and beads of cylindrical type but tapering at the ends constitute some of the main or more notable varieties. Etched beads of square shape having floral or geometric decoration, and triangular and lozenge-shaped beads are also present in this collection. Terracotta beads and pendants could also be classed in this group of antiquities. There are also some terracotta ear-studs of traditional type.

Seals and sealings from Tamluk require an extremely careful evaluation. This is particularly true of a small circular seal of semi-precious stone having a grotesque animal carved on it. The real identity and cultural affinity of this exquisite archaeological specimen is difficult to be found in the immediate neighbourhood and as some archaeologists venture to suggest it may well belong to a group of objects which possess cultural affinity with the far off regions of Western Asia converging on the peninsular areas of South-Eastern or Eastern Mediterranean. To this object we may also add several peculiar looking seals of small size and roundish shape unmistakably pointing to the Persian Gulf area. If these western connections are eventually proved in a conclusive manner then it would go a long way in widening the cultural horizon of ancient Bengal much beyond the scope of merely early historic period.

The historic or, more specially, the early historic cultural relics from this site point to pre-Mauryan and fully developed Mauryan style of art. Ancient Tāmralipta was particularly rich in respect of terracotta art (Plate XLIV). This time a remarkable smiling face adorned with coils of hair points to comparable examples from Pāṭaliputra region. Other Mauryan finds present before us a rich variety of fragmentary terracotta figures well-known in archaeological circles.

The finds from the so-called post-Mauryan or Śuṅga age are most elaborate and numerous. Through these, we can hope to form a fair idea about the socio-cultural environment of ancient Bengal. Richly adorned *Yakṣiṇī* figures abound in this area. Apart from this, richly dressed women and children, male figures, groups of elephant rider, caparisoned elephants, etc., form other subjects of a large number of terracotta plaques. Some of these early terracotta plaques are related to the depiction of Jātaka stories. In one case a fragmentary plaque shows the carrying of coins on a cart with a big wheel and sides protected with woven palm-leaf or bamboo-stick mats, obviously an example of artistic representation of Jetavana episode. In another remarkable instance a group of four over-sected elephants are shown standing in a row. This class of elephant-depiction in terracotta plaques reminds us of representations of elephant-catching scenes recovered

from Chandraketugarh, also in lower or Southern Bengal. Various types of terracotta carts on wheels in the form of rams or elephants mainly belong to Śuṅga date.

In Tamluk the Kuṣāṇa age is represented by a large number of terracottas pointing to art forms originating either from indigenous sources or influenced by styles and subjects derived from fruitful contacts with sister civilisations. Thus in one remarkable figurine we meet a turbaned and self-confident male-type of indigenous character adorned with multiple ear-rings and a type of flat neck-ornament, with arms resting on the waist. But another terracotta, probably belonging to the late Kuṣāṇa period, shows an example of sculpture in relief with a typical conical cap having banded decorations on the lower portions surmounted on a nicely finished male head. This male face possesses an accomplished modelling and a remarkably clear representation of facial features animated by and endowed with a gentle look. To this class of objects also belong a female head showing elaborate coiffure in the western style, a headgear decorated with rosettes and a five-petalled flower on the tresses of hair on one side. These two terracottas make us conscious about Western Asian and more particularly Irano-Central Asian association of Kuṣāṇa times influenced by the so-called Roman elements as found in Western Asia.

The transition from Śuṅga-Kuṣāṇa art style to the far more three-dimensionally articulate sculptural style of the so-called Gupta age is also well represented at Tamluk. In one terracotta of this period we come across a plaque showing male faces under a *chatra*. The three-quarter back-view of a boy could also be placed in this class. Another mentionable standing male figure of this age is shown on a medium sized plaque. Here we are struck by an unmistakable adherence to Gupta practices in the matter of showing figures in depth, hairs in stylised curls, full-blown eyes, and an overall restraint and majesty. The piece may well be assigned to early Gupta period. The broken bust showing a couple by the side of a balcony (?) have much to reveal in respect of a modelling that illumined and ultimately reached its maturity in the prime age of sculptural art in this sub-continent during the middle of first millennium A. D.

So far Tamluk and its immediate neighbourhood have yielded a few sealings which are much eroded but resemble similar pieces from Nālandā and other related sites of Pāla times. Of the various antiquities of early mediaeval period mention must be made of a notable narrative scene on pottery fragments, possibly moulded in relief as a kind of decoration. This type of potteries merit sustained comparison before we can arrive at some definite opinion. Here we see that male and female figures are skilfully adjusted within visual panels dividing the surface of the pottery fabric. Quite recently a small standing female figurine in bronze is found out from Tamluk. It is safe to assume that this particular object belonged to either a late Pāla date or to a period immediately succeeding it.

The richness and variety of Tamluk finds need closer examination. In respect of pre-history and proto-history, investigators may well take up the problem of linking the missing trails of cultural contacts in the light of latest discoveries in the western areas of West Bengal and eastern areas of Bihar. Fruitful conclusions could also be arrived at by comparing and analysing antiquities from Tamluk with finds from coastal areas of South-Eastern and Western Asia ultimately extending to Eastern Mediterranean coastal regions. Tamluk region representing ancient Tāmralipta requires a thorough exploration and systematic investigation by archaeologists and art historians. It must be remembered that the terracotta art of Tamluk could only be judged in proper perspectives if we constantly compare, co-relate and evaluate it with terracottas recovered from Panna, Tilda, Harinarayanpur, Hariharpur, Chandraketugarh and many other sites in the Medinipur, 24-Parganas and Howrah districts. At this stage, a venture could be made to draw, at least in outline, the basic features of early terracotta art of Bengal and its special marks of distinctive quality or style.

Anthropomorphic and theriomorphic potteries as well as archaic and apparently ageless terracottas showing facial suggestions of enigmatic associations so far elude us in the matter of assignment of their age and determination of their cultural significance. For a better understanding and evaluation of these problems an investigation is required in the folk art, customs, cults and rituals which survive in the Tamluk region.

Tāmralipta region requires a combined study in museums well-stocked with early terracottas and other archaeological finds from lower Bengal. Asutosh Museum of Indian Art and the State Archaeological Gallery, both in the city of Calcutta, are of primary importance in this regard. To this study in museums must be added a sustained and rigorous field-excavation and exploration.

THE MANASĀ IMAGES OF BENGAL

ENAMUL HAQUE

Manasā, the snake goddess, appears to be a late entrant into the ever assimilating pantheon of Hinduism. The origin and development of this goddess has been studied by various scholars.¹ She is not mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* and the principal older *purāṇas*. But she occupies considerable space in the *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa*, a comparatively later work, the compilation of which continued till about the 16th century A. D.² Even then, it does not provide with appropriate iconography of the goddess other than occasionally describing her as 'nāgendragañayuktā sā nāgabhūṣaṇabhūṣitā nāgendrabanditā',³ or 'nāgendravāhinīm devīm'.⁴

Excluding the unimportant fragments, we have noticed 58 images of Manasā discovered in Bengal, mostly in stone and a few in bronzes, dating from c. 7th to c. 13th century A. D. P. K. Maity, in a recent study, has challenged the validity of taking any of these images as that of Manasā on the ground, among others, that the *dhyānas* cited for their identification so far, cannot be assigned to a date before the 13th century,⁵ and, these images are identified as Manasā because of their association with snakes.⁶ He also asserts that Manasā was never worshipped iconically and it is an after-thought of the poets and the Brahmins to relate the extant snake-hooded images of earlier period with the cult of Manasā.⁷ It is our opinion that inspite of the laborious attempt by the above mentioned author, the view of N. K. Bhattasali and others like J. N. Banerjea⁸ and P. S.

1. N. K. Bhattasali, *Iconography of the Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, Dacca, 1929 (henceforth *IBBS*), pp. 212-227; P. S. Rawson, "The iconography of the Goddess Manasā," *Journal of Oriental Art* (N. S.), vol. 1, 1955, pp. 151-158; P. K. Maity, *Historical Studies in the Cult of the Goddess Manasā*, Calcutta, 1966. The present paper is an extended version of an earlier study on Manasā included in the author's unpublished thesis; cf. Enamul Haque, *Iconography of the Hindu Sculpture of Bengal (upto c. 1250 A. D.)*, D. Phil. Thesis, Oxford, 1973, pp. 466-479.
2. R. C. Hazra, *Studies in the Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, Dacca, 1940, p. 166.
3. *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa*, ed. and tr. by P. Tarkaratna, Calcutta, 1904 (henceforth *BVP*), *Praktikhaṇḍam*, 1. 68.
4. *Ibid.*, *Śrikr̥ṣṇajanmakhaṇḍam*, 51. 61b.
5. P. K. Maity, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-221, 240 and 319.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 218.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 221.
8. J. N. Banerjea, *Development of Hindu Iconography*, Calcutta, 2nd Edition, 1956 (henceforth *DHI*), p. 350.

Rawson,⁹ who did not question the identity of these images of Manasā, remain to be superseded. Of course, it is agreed by all that Manasā is a goddess of non-Aryan folk origin. As a recognised phenomenon in the history of religion, a mass of local myths and rituals mingled and produced a goddess who guaranteed her propitiators "health and prosperity, sons and grandsons and immunity from snake-bite." The abundant *Manasā-maṅgala-kāvya*s of the 15th-18th centuries mediaeval Bengal will bear it out. These legends particularly indicate the struggle for this goddess to be absorbed into the fold of Hindu hierarchy of cults. It appears to have been argued very appropriately that in its heredity, Manasā owes to some extent to Sarasvatī, and also to Jāṅgulī and Padmāvātī, the Buddhist and Jaina goddesses respectively.¹⁰ N. K. Bhattasali thought, after analysing the literary evidence, that Manasā is believed to have obtained a footing in Aryanised Bengal by 10th-11th century A. D.¹¹ This finds agreement with P. S. Rawson's observation that the anthropomorphic cult image of Manasā reached a definitive form by the 10th or 11th century.¹² P. K. Maity concluded that as an after-effect of the Muslim invasion of eastern India, i. e., 13th-14th century onwards, a new culture found expression in all walks of life. Many Buddhists and Hindus joined the new faith of Islam and, as a reaction, the upper class Hindus became more tolerant and turned their attention to local deities. In the process, Manasā acquired a new stature. Her earlier aniconic symbols in the form of Sij or Snuhi tree, or a pot or both, then began to be worshipped side by side with the "images associated with snakes".¹³

It seems that P. K. Maity was overwhelmed by the mediaeval *Manasā-maṅgala-kāvya*s and refused to investigate beyond the charted evidence. A mere lack of complete or appropriate documentation into historical researches should not restrain one from making probable hypotheses. T. W. Clark, while studying the evolution of Hinduism in mediaeval Bengali literature with particular reference to Śiva, Caṅḍī and Manasā, rightly remarked that, "the authors were not writing of contemporary life and worship, but of periods preceeding their own by three, four or even more centuries. In the interval between the time of the events described and the date of composition, some of the stories and the popular characters who figure in them had been conventionalized and lifted from the level of folklore, resting on a basis of remembered experience, to that of literary creation at a distance, which, though often of a high order of dramatic presentation and characterisation, was bound by no obligation to accurate reporting of the life, actions and emotional and religious atmosphere of the peoples from whom the stories sprang".¹⁴ Indeed the essence

9. *Op. cit.* It is very unfortunate that P. K. Maity appears to have completely ignored this important essay in his London University thesis and its subsequent publication.

10. *IBBS.*, pp. 217-223.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 224.

12. P. S. Rawson, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

13. P. K. Maity, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-240.

14. T. W. Clark, "Evolution of Hinduism in Mediaeval Bengali Literature: Śiva, Caṅḍī, Manasā", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 1955, p. 504.

of a folklore is to draw a hero-divinity on the human scale and to launch it into the stream of eternity. It is no less true in the case of the goddess Manasā.

P. K. Maity, while rejecting the established views about the identifications of the images of Manasā, himself could not offer any satisfactory explanation of their real identity beyond commenting that these were 'originally images used for temple worship'.¹⁵ He, curiously enough, did not suggest any cult or deity whatsoever to which they were related. We are inclined to agree with P. S. Rawson who suggested that the "traditional northern Indian concept of the Nāga has supplied the prototype for the images of goddess Manasā,"¹⁶ although such possibility was precluded by Bhattasali earlier.¹⁷ It is significant to note that these images of snake-hooded female goddess have been mostly found in eastern India, to be more precise, in Bengal and a few in Bihar, Orissa and Assam. This happily agrees with the opinion of T. W. Clark who found that, "Manasā is a Bengali deity. Snake worship is, or at any rate was, widely practised in India and Nepal, but enquiries of scholars in northern, southern and western Indian lore have not brought to light a single instance of the worship of a snake goddess who is herself not a snake, except that of Manasā in Bengal."¹⁸

We can even be more precise about the location, if not of the place of origin, which was under the domination of the cult of Manasā represented by these images. So far all scholars thought her worship to have been prevalent 'throughout' Bengal. But after studying the provenances of the extant images, we find that not a single piece of the sculptures mentioned earlier had been discovered in East Bengal. This hitherto unnoticed fact at least indicates that the cult did not originate or even became popular in the form of these images in this area and, therefore, Bhattasali's assumption that the merchant-prince hero Candra of the *Manasā-maṅgala-kāvya*s could have been, in fact, king Śricandradeva of the Candra dynasty of East Bengal, would have to be rejected.¹⁹ This evidence of provenance also creates a problem for wholly accepting the views of D.C. Sen, Asutosh Bhattacharya, T. W. Clark, Benoy Ghosh and P.K. Maity that the cult had its origin in 'West Bengal' or Rāḍha²⁰ thereby suggestively excluding the 'North Bengal' or Varendra, the latter having been the area which produced no less than 48 out of 58 sculptures located by us. If this quantitative evidence of the provenance of overwhelming number of extant sculptures indicate anything about the origin of the cult of Manasā then Varendra or North Bengal is the area which has to be marked for that distinction. Alternately, a probable explanation is that the cult, if originated in Rāḍha or any other

15. P. K. Maity, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

16. P. S. Rawson, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

17. *IBBS.*, p. 216.

18. T. W. Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 507.

19. *IBBS.*, p. 225.

20. P. K. Maity summarises the views of all these scholars, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-149. He gives his own views, pp. 158-164. But we do not agree with K. M. Sen, N. K. Bhattasali and N. R. Ray who suggested a South Indian origin for Manasā. Their views are also summarised by P. K. Maity, pp. 137-144.

locality, rather flourished with more numerous adherents in Varendra. As for East Bengal, it is possible that the worship of Manasā in iconic form did not take root in the area. N.K. Bhattasali reported the discovery of some "pots and utensils with figure of snakes on them, evidently used in the worship of Manasā" during the excavation of a tank at Raghurampur in the district of Dacca.²¹ This practice of Manasā-worship is still current in different parts of Bengal. Therefore, it is to be understood that like many other Hindu deities, Manasā emerged in its anthropomorphic forms in parts of Bengal from her non-Aryan background, incorporating some features of its earlier aniconic existence, such as the depiction on the pedestal of a *ghaṭa* with snakes issuing out of it, or branches of Sij tree being held in one or both of her hands. Manasā, once the deity of the lower class people, gradually became accepted in the upper and orthodox section and, on the basis of an inscribed label on an image, even a royal queen in the 10-11th century is believed to have been her devotee.²²

N. K. Bhattasali noticed the following *dhyānas* used in the ceremony of the worship of Manasā each one of which gives a description of the deity :

- (i) "*Devīmambāmahinām śasādhavaravanām cārukāntīm vadānyām
haṁsārūḍhāmudārāmaruṇitavasanām sarvadām sarvvadaiva
smerāsyām maṇḍitāṅgīm kanakamaṇigaṇairnāgaratnairanekair
vande'ham sāsṭanāgāmurukucayugalām yoginīm kāmārūpām.*"²³
- (ii) "*Hemāmbhojanibhām lasadviśadharālaṅkārasaṁśobhitām
smerāsyām parito mahoragaṇaiḥ saṁsevyamānām sadā
devīmāstikamātaram śīśusutām āpinatūṅgastanīm
hastāmbhojayugena nāgayugalam saṁvibhratimāśraye.*"²⁴
- (iii) "*Kāntyā kañcanasannibhām suvadanām padmānanām śobhanām
nāgendraiḥ kṛtaśekharam phaṇimayīm divyāṅgarāgānvitām
cārvaṅgīm dadhatīm prasādamabhayaṁ nityam karābhyām mudā
vande śaṅkaraputrikām viśaharīm padmodbhavam jāṅgulim.*"²⁵
- (iv) "*Cārucampakavarṇābham sarvāṅgasumanoharām
iśadhāsyaprasannāsyām śobhitām sūkṣmavāsasā
kabarībhāraśobhāḍhyām ratnābharaṇabhūṣitām
sarvābhayapradām devīm bhaktānugrahakātarām
sarvavidyāpradām śāntām sarvavidyāviśāradām
nāgendravāhinīm devīm bhaje nāgeśvarīm parām.*"²⁶

21. *IBBS.*, p. 225.

22. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (henceforth *JASB*), XXVIII, 1932, p. 181.

23. *IBBS.*, p. 218.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 227.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 223.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 219.

Several more *dhyānas* are quoted below :

- (v) “*Viṣaharīm gauravarṇām trinetrām nānālaṅkārabhūṣitām*
kañcukābaddhagātrīm ananta-vāsuki-takṣakamukuṭām
kulīrakarkaṭa-karṇābharaṇām
śaṅkha-padma-kamvalānvitām padmahārām prasannavadanām dhyāyet.”²⁷
- (vi) “*Om Padmāvatiṃ mahābhāgām sarvadā bhakta-vatsalām*
trilocanām caturvāhu-kirīṭi-kuṇḍalānvitām
devīm viṣaharīm gaurīm nīla-nāgadadhatkacām
takṣaka-ananta-vāsuki-mukuṭacandra-śekharam
kulikena ca nāgena savyaśravaṇarājītām
taptakāñcaṇavarṇābhām nāgayajñopavitinīm
śaṅkha-pāla varābhyañca dakṣastamahojvalām
kamvalenābhayenaiva savyāpāṇi-vibhūṣitām
dhūmra-varṇena nāgena keyūranavayauvanām
svaṛṇa-varṇena nāgena kañkaṇa supraṭiṣṭhitām
kunda-varṇena nāgena kaṭisūtra-virājītām
raktavastra-paridhānā padmāsanā-samanvitām
caturbhiḥ rāja-hamsaiśca vimāna-varagāminim.”²⁸
- (vii) “*Om devīm kirīṭi-kuṇḍala-dharām śiracandra-vibhūṣitām*
jaṭājuṭa-samāyuktā pīnonnata-payodharām
nayanotpala-patrābhām śaradindu-samānanām
nāga-hāreṇa saṃyuktām trinetrām varadām śivām
bāla-kadamba-gaurābhām padmām padmakarām śubhām
nānālaṅkāra-samāyuktām hamsārurhā (sic) -varapradām
sureśair (sic) -stuyamānām tvām nāgamātaramambikām.”²⁹
- (viii) “*Śvetacampakavarṇābhām ratnabhūṣaṇabhūṣitām*
vahṇisuddhāmsukādhānām nāgayajñopavitinīm
mahājñānayutām tāñca pravarañjaninām varām
siddhādhiṣṭhāṭṭṛdeviñca siddhām siddhipradām bhaje
iti dhyātvā ca tām devīm mūlenaiva prapūjayet.”³⁰
- (ix) “*Ratnasimhāsane devīm vāsayāmāsa bhaktitaḥ*
svargaṅgāyā jalenaiva ratnakumbhasthitena ca
snāpayāmāsa manasām mahendro vedamantrataḥ.”³¹

27. P. K., Maity, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 214-215.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 215.

30. *Devībhāgavatam*, ed. by. P. Tarkaratna, Calcutta, 1832 Śakābda, *Navama Skandha*, 48.2a-4a,

31. *Ibid.*, 117b-118b.

One thing is clear from the above texts that none of those *dhyānas* or the descriptions of Manasā from various sources conform to any of the images discovered so far, although some of them are very popularly recited even today. Nevertheless, they mention so many features which enormously help to comprehend the iconography of the deity. But the sweeping suggestion made by P. K. Maity that these were composed by the Brāhmaṇas long after the sculptures were made "to describe the goddess in terms of the older images"³² cannot be accepted. Had it been the case, then it would have been normal to find one or more of these texts to conform entirely to the known images of Manasā. But none of them do so. It is, therefore, thought that the large number of images made during several centuries prior to the coming of the Muslims with standard features and discovered over an extensive area were made in accordance with some contemporary iconographic texts, need not be doubted at all.

The extant Manasā images show the goddess with 2 or 4 arms and uniformly seated in *lalitāsana*, with right leg pendant.³³ Usually, seven snakes spread their hoods like a canopy over her head, but cases of five or nine snakes are also known. She is always adorned, befitting her role as Nāgeśvarī, the queen of the snakes. Almost invariably her bosoms are held by a *sarpa-kucabandha*. A very remarkable feature in almost all the images is the presence of a *padma* at the top of the *prabhāvali*, above the snake-hoods, occupying the usual place of the *kirtimukha* in most other deities. The significance of this feature is uncertain but that the symbol was an iconographic requirement, cannot be doubted. Probably it represents one of the *nāgas*, namely Padma.³⁴ The goddess herself was known as Padmāvatī or Padmā.³⁵ Similarly, except in a few cases the usual places of the Vidyādharas are taken by the flying therianthropomorphic *nāgas* one at each top corner, carrying garland or flowers. On the right of the goddess is represented Ṛṣi Jaratkāru, her consort with a beard, emaciated body and a unique turban of its own, who is always shown seated in *yogapaṭṭāsana*.³⁶ On her left is Āstikamuni, the saviour of the snakes in *mahārājatilāsana*, with a single snake-hood at his back. Occasionally, the two attendant deities swap their places. According to N.K. Bhattasali, this latter figure may be king Vāsuki, the brother of the goddess, which is unlikely. But very rarely, Āstika is shown on the lap of his mother as a child. In such cases, the sculptors did not depict Jaratkāru at all.

The list of the Manasā images discovered so far in Bengal is given below:³⁷

- (1) [1351] Manasā, stone, Dinajpur dist. DM no. 8 ; *IBBS*, p.226, pl. LXXIIIa.
- (2) [1352] Manasā, stone, Kalihar (Rajshahi), DM no. 67. 43.

32. P. K. Maity, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

33. With one exception where it is seated in *baddhapadmāsana* (L. no. 1397), cf. foot-note 37 below.

34. *Agnipurāna*, ed. by P. Tarkaratna, Calcutta, 1314. B. S., 50.13a.

35. *DHI*, p. 563.

36. A separate stone image of Jaratkāru (c. 11th century) with his peculiar turban, beard and emaciated body and seated in *dhyānāsana* has been found at Kachra (Dinajpur) along side an image of Manasā (photograph lying with Mr. Tarapada Santra).

37. 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

- (3) [1353] Manasā, stone, Ch. Nawabganj (Rajshahi), DM no. 69. 224.
- (4) [1354] Manasā, stone, Bharadangi (Dinajpur), DM no. 70. 312.
- (5) [1355] Manasā, stone, Bharadangi (Dinajpur), DM no. 70. 313.
- (6) [1356] Manasā, stone, Dhanjuri (Dinajpur), DM no. 70. 314.
- (7) [1357] Manasā, bronze, North Bengal, DM no. 71. 215.
- (8) [1358] Manasā, stone, North Bengal, in MHM.
- (9) [1359] Manasā, stone, North Bengal, in MHM.
- (10) [1360] Manasā, stone, North Bengal, in MHM.
- (11) [1361] Manasā, stone, Bhadisvar (Birbhum), IMC no. 6553, A16239 ;
Archaeological Survey of India Annual Report (henceforth *ASIAR*),
1921-22, p. 78, pl. XXVIIIc ; *ASIAR*, 1926-27, p. 209.
- (12) [1362] Manasā, stone, Dinajpur dist. in DN.
- (13) [1363] Manasā, stone, Dinajpur dist. in DN.
- (14) [1364] Manasā, stone, Dinajpur dist. in DN.
- (15) [1365] Manasā, stone, Dinajpur dist. in DN.
- (16) [1366] Manasā, stone, North Bengal, in AMC.
- (17) [1367] Manasā, stone, Salas (Dinajpur), in AMC.
- (18) [1368] Manasā, stone, Gangarampur (Dinajpur), AMC no. T2158.
- (19) [1369] Manasā, stone, North Bengal, AMC no. 3388.
- (20) [1370] Manasā, stone, Gokulpur (24-Parganas), in SAGC.
- (21) [1371] Manasā, stone, Tapandighi (W. Dinajpur), SAGC no. S.208.
- (22) [1372] Manasā, stone, Kakursingh (W. Dinajpur), in SAGC.
- (23) [1373] Manasā, stone, Tapan (Dinajpur), VRM no. 66.
- (24) [1374] Manasā, bronze, Dinajpur dist. VRM no. 171 ; R. G. Basak & D. C.
Bhattacharya, *A Catalogue of the Archaeological Relics in the Museum of
Varendra Research Society* (henceforth *VRS-Cat.*), Rajshahi 1919, p. 30.
- (25) [1375] Manasā, stone, Jessore dist. VRM no. 184.
- (26) [1376] Manasā, stone, North Bengal, VRM no. 284 ; *VRS-Cat.*, p. 29-30.
- (27) [1377] Manasā, stone, Dinajpur dist. VRM no. 322.
- (28) [1378] Manasā, stone, Padumshahar (Rajshahi), VRM no. 330 ; *VRS-Cat.*, p. 30.
- (29) [1379] Manasā, stone, North Bengal, VRM no. 485.
- (30) [1380] Manasā, stone, Niyamatpur (Rajshahi), VRM no. 1588 ; *Varendra
Research Society Annual Report* (henceforth *VRSAR*), 1936-38, p. 28.
- (31) [1381] Manasā, stone, Bengal, in Earl Morse Collection ; *Indian Sculpture : from
the Collection of Mr. & Mrs. E. Morse*, Harvard, 1963, p. 18, fig. 19.
- (32) [1382] Manasā, stone, North Bengal, in AKMM.

to the author's forthcoming book : *Iconography of the Hindu Sculptures of Bengal (up to circa 1250 A. D.)*. In the foot-notes of this paper, the sculptures have been referred to with the serial numbers (i. e., L. nos.) of the said Appendix. In this List the details of the abbreviations are as follows : DM=Dacca Museum ; MHM=Mahasthan Museum, Bogra ; IMC=Indian Museum, Calcutta ; DN=Dinajpur Museum ; AMC=Asutosh Museum, Calcutta ; SAGC=State Archaeological Gallery, Calcutta ; VRM=Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi ; AKMM=Akshay Kumar Memorial Museum, Jalpaiguri ; RSP=Rangpur Sahitya Parishad.

- (33) [1383] Manasā, stone, at Patkata (Jalpaiguri).
- (34) [1384] Manasā, stone, at Kachra (W. Dinajpur).
- (35) [1385] Manasā, (& Jaratkāru), stone, at Kachra (W. Dinajpur).
- (36) [1386] Manasā, stone, at Behiapara (Jalpaiguri).
- (37) [1387] Manasā, stone, at Dacca.
- (38) [1388] Manasā, stone, at Bansihari (Dinajpur); *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (henceforth *JASB*), XXVIII, 1932, p. 178, pl. 6, fig. 3.
- (39) [1389] Manasā, stone, at Marail (Dinajpur), *JASB*, XXVIII, 1932, p. 181.
- (40) [1390] Manasā, stone, at Akalipur (Birbhum); M. Chakravarty, *Birbhūm-vivaraṇa*, II, Birbhum, 1326 B. S., p. 75, fig. 38.
- (41) [1391] Manasā, stone, at Paikore (Birbhum); *ASIAR*, 1921-22, p. 79-80, pl. XXVIIIb.
- (42) [1392] Manasā, bronze, Rajshahi, IMC no. 9212, A24357 ; *ASIAR*, 1934-35, pp. 80 & 111, pl. XXIVb ; R. C. Majumdar, ed. *History of Bengal*, vol. 1 (henceforth *HB-I*), Dacca, 1943, p. 460, pl. LXVI, fig. 159.
- (43) [1393] Manasā, bronze, Pandua (Maldah), VRM no. 118.
- (44) [1394] Manasā, stone, Bengal, in Earl Morse Collection ; *Indian Sculpture : from the Collection*, etc., p. 18, fig. 18.
- (45) [1395] Manasā, stone, at Paharpur ; *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, no. 55, Delhi, 1938, pp. 23 & 88, pl. XXXVIIIg ; *HB-I*, pp. 460-61 & f. note.
- (46) [1396] Manasā, stone, at RSP : R. D. Banerji, *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculptures*, Delhi, 1933, p. 122, pl. LXIVa ; *HB-I*, p. 461.
- (47) [1397] Manasā, stone, Khidrapalli (Rajshahi), VRM no. 800 ; *VRSAR*, 1928-29, p. 16, pl. 3 ; *HB-I*, p. 460, pl. LXVII, fig. 161.
- (48) [1398] Manasā, stone, Padumshahar (Rajshahi), VRM no. 380 ; *VRS-Cat.*, p. 30.
- (49) [1399] Manasā, stone, Padumshahar (Rajshahi), VRM no. 378 ; *VRS-Cat.*, p. 30.
- (50) [1400] Manasā, stone, Padumshahar (Rajshahi), VRM no. 376 ; *Ibid.*
- (51) [1853] Manasā, sandstone, Dhepikura, Dinajpur dist. DM no. 71.28.
- (52) [1854] Manasā, bronze (frag.), North Bengal, DM no. 75.83.
- (53) [1855] Manasā, black stone (frag.), Paniura (Rajshahi), DM no. 75.312.
- (54) [1856] Manasā, black stone, Bujruk Mahmudpur (Rajshahi), DM no. 75.545.
- (55) [1857] Manasā, black stone, Bujruk Mahmudpur (Rajshahi), DM no. 75.1154.
- (56) [1858] Manasā, black stone, Jinarpur-Gomastapur (Rajshahi), DM no. 76.511.
- (57) [1859] Manasā, black stone, Aihai (Rajshahi), DM no. 76.517.
- (58) [1860] Manasā, sandstone, Kundapukur (Rangpur), DM no. 76.1054.

We do not have full descriptions of four,³⁸ and the rest may be generally divided into two groups.

GROUP I : 2-ARMED

At least 51 images belong to this group showing the goddess with two arms. They may further be divided on the basis of attributes in their hands.

38. L. Nos. 1398, 1399, 1400 and 1854.

TYPE-1

(Plates XLV, figs. 1 & 2)

48 sculptures belong to this type,³⁹ all in stone except two, holding a fruit in the right hand in the *varada* fashion and a snake in the left. Two images deserve particular attention. A bronze image (L. no. 1374) in the Varendra Research Museum at Rajshahi (henceforth VRM) is seated in *lalitāsana* actually on a globe-like *ghaṭa* which is encircled by a snake. It does not show any attendant. A stone image in the same Museum (L. no. 1379) shows, in addition to normal attendants and features, four snakes on each side of the goddess, carved one above the other in a vertical line. It is to be noticed that the most popular of the *dhyānas* in Bengal for the worship of Manasā describes her to be accompanied by eight snakes.⁴⁰ The backslab of this image is topped by a Śiva-*liṅga*, probably indicating the Śaiva heredity of the goddess.

TYPE-2

(Plate XLVI, fig. 3)

In two 2-armed images, both in bronze, the goddess is shown under the canopy of snakes with a child held on her left lap.⁴¹ The VRM specimen shows a fruit in her right hand whereas the IMC specimen holds a branch of the Sij tree in the same hand. In the latter, the child is fully adorned with jewels, *yajñopavīta* and a snake-hood behind the crown, indicating him to be no one else than Āstika. The Heeramaneck collection of the USA possesses a similar 2-armed bronze image of Manasā with some added attendants, one *nāgīnī* standing on each side, and Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya on the upper part of the *prabhāvalī*, seated at the top of the uprights of the throne. The branches of the Sij tree are tucked on either side behind the hoods of the seven snakes.⁴²

TYPE-3

One image in a private collection in the USA shows the goddess in *lalitāsana* with the child on her lap. But except the donor couple, it does not depict any other attendant figure.⁴³

GROUP II : 4-ARMED

Comparatively fewer images of the four-armed Manasā figures, only three, have been found in Bengal. They vary with regard to the attributes held in the hands and none of them shows the consort of the goddess along with her.

39. L. nos. 1351, 1352, 1353, 1354, 1355, 1356, 1357, 1358, 1359, 1360, 1361, 1362, 1363, 1364, 1365, 1366, 1367, 1368, 1369, 1370, 1371, 1372, 1373, 1374, 1375, 1376, 1377, 1378, 1379, 1380, 1381, 1382, 1383, 1384, 1385, 1386, 1387, 1388, 1389, 1390, 1391, 1853, 1855, 1856, 1857, 1858, 1859 and 1860. N. B. Sanyal (*Varendra Research Society Annual Report*, 1928-29, p. 16) and P. K. Maity (*op. cit.*, p. 207) were both wrong in taking our L. no. 1378 as 4-armed.

40. *IBBS*, p. 218.

41. L. nos. 1392 and 1393.

42. Perry Rathbone, *The Art of India and Nepal : N. A. Heeramaneck Collection*, Boston, 1966, p. 73, pl. 66.

43. L. no. 1394.

TYPE-1

Two stone images⁴⁴ are almost identical, each showing the goddess with a child on her lap held by the lower left hand, the corresponding right holding a fruit. Both the upper hands hold long leafy branches, obviously, of the Sij tree.⁴⁵ The Rangpur specimen is profusely ornamented, has a hood of nine snakes and is one of the best executed and preserved images of Manasā. The upper *prabhāvalī* shows the *kirtimukha* at the top, unusual for Manasā images, flanked by Vidyādharas. In the centre of the *saptaratha* pedestal is placed the *ghaṭa*, from which issues out the lotus providing the seat of the goddess. In the specimen from Paharpur, a pair of *ghaṭas* is placed on the left of the pedestal.

TYPE-2

(Plate XLVI, fig. 4)

The image from Khidrapalli (Rajshahi) is a unique piece where the 4-armed goddess is shown seated in *vaddhapadmāsana* on a *viśvapadma*, below which is placed the ornamented *ghaṭa*.⁴⁶ A pair of *nāga* and *nāgini*, in their anthropomorphic form and showing *añjali*, are issuing out of the *ghaṭa*, one on either side. The goddess is flanked on her left by a row of five *nāgas* in *añjali*, one above the other, and probably had similar features on her right as is indicated by the remainder of the broken *prabhāvalī* on that side. She holds clock-wise the rosary, snake, pitcher and manuscript in her hands. A *Śiva-liṅga* is depicted above the row of five *nāgas*. The goddess is adorned and sheltered under the hood of seven snakes. A four-armed Manasā is known from Bihar,⁴⁷ which resembles this one in at least the sitting posture, the *ghaṭa* on the pedestal, and some of the attributes held in the hand (*varada*, rosary, pitcher and manuscript). It also shows the *Śiva-liṅga* on the right of the goddess and a miniature Gaṇeśa on the left. The attributes of the rosary, pitcher and manuscript in both the images indicate their very close association with Sarasvatī and indeed Bhattasali's conjecture on this point acquires more support.⁴⁸

44. L. nos. 1395 and 1396.

45. Both K. N. Dikshit (*Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, no. 55, Delhi, 1938, p. 88) and J. N. Banerjea (in R. C. Majumdar, ed. *History of Bengal*, vol. I, Dacca, 1943, p. 461, f. note 1) were wrong in finding a non-existent snake in one hand of the Paharpur specimen.

46. L. no. 1397.

47. Indian Museum, Calcutta, no. 3950 ; R. D. Banerji, *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculptures*, Delhi, 1933, pl. LXIVc.

48. *IBBS*, pp. 218-220.

FOLK BRONZES OF BANGLADESH

R. K. SARMA

The tradition of bronze casting in Bengal is one of the oldest. But the history of this art *par excellence* is shrouded in deep mystery and, hence, we still do not precisely know as to when this rich art tradition had its beginning in Bengal. And this is particularly true in respect of bronzes of folk origin. The ravages of time coupled with whimsical natural phenomena may account for the total obliteration of earlier specimens as we find in the other spheres of cultural objects that depict the socio-religious life of Bengal in the past.

In Bengal as well as in other parts of the sub-continent the making of images had always been regulated by some iconographic canons of the Hindu-Buddhist pantheons. The examples of such images are quite numerous. We can call these canonical plastic art-forms as classical or traditional sculptures. Side by side with these classical sculptures, we find yet another group of sculptures in bronze which do not always conform to any iconographic code or detail. They were produced in mass-scale by the local folk artists for use in every household and village shrine. Though devoid of canonical iconographic detail, nevertheless, they are distinguished by their singular originality and vigorous expressive forms. "This", in the language of O. C. Gangoly, "has helped to build up, as it were, a vernacular plastic language somewhat remote from the classical and highly developed tongue of the priestly iconographs."¹ We are inclined to call this later group of icons as folk bronzes. The folk bronzes comprise images, lamps, incense-burners, etc., and are available even now from time to time at important village fairs and festivals.

Strikingly enough, the Bengal rural craftsmen showed their keen aesthetic awareness in the making of these bronzes in the prevailing socio-religious background. Ritual ceremonies combined with their intricacies are the salient features of rural Bengal and these art-forms are the clear manifestations of such spiritual experience of the simple village folks.

The tradition of classical art, as is well known, has always emerged and thrived under the lavish patronage of the ruling dynasties in all ages. The Pāla and Sena rule in Bengal

1. O. C. Gangoly, "A Collection of Indian Brasses and Bronzes," *Rupam*, no. 31, 1927, p. 81.

thus saw the emergence and culmination of a school of art known as Bengal art, and examples of such art-forms in stone, bronze, wood, etc., are numerous in various museums and private collections of the world. But the folk art, with which we are concerned here, without being much influenced by this classical tradition, continued to be produced in mass-scale in bronzes and in other media in their own unique way by the village craftsmen. And the socio-religious need was the vital driving force in this activity. Art for art's sake was not their motto rather their main purpose was to make image of their personal family god, or that of the village god.

The makers of these bronzes, though cared little for the details of iconographic perfection, were careful about the harmony, proportions and spontaneity which formed their important characteristics. Simple as the Bengal rural folks were, they unerringly conceived the images of their gods and goddesses and shaped them according to their free-will without involving much in technicalities of the classical perfection or of the *Śilpasastra*. Generally a prominent but pointed nose, large round and full-blown eyes, and rather crude execution of the body characterize the folk bronzes of Bengal. But howsoever crude these bronzes may be, they are technically perfect with some of the old restraint, majesty and grandeur.

Dacca Museum in recent years has acquired a large number of interesting bronzes of bewildering variety and richness from different areas of Bangladesh. These include chiefly the Brahmanical images of Kṛṣṇa Rādhā, Viṣṇu, Gaṇeśa, Durgā, Kārtikeya, Kālī, etc., and also lamps of different varieties. They offer a convenient opportunity to study "the plastic language" of rural Bengal. Almost in all cases these traditional figures have been adapted for ritualistic uses. These are all made in solid casting method.

The term 'bronze' used in our present discussion needs clarification. It was a regular practice amongst the metal-image makers of the sub-continent to use copper, or a copper-base alloy, or brass to make figures. Throughout northern India including Bengal *aṣṭadhātu* or 'octo-alloy', a term first used by N. K. Bhattasali,² which is an amalgamation of eight such metals as zinc, gold, silver, iron, tin, lead, mercury/antimony and copper, was considered to be auspicious and hence was used for image-making. The term bronze, which is usually a combination of copper and tin, is however used loosely to denote metal image made of *aṣṭadhātu*.³

One of the important features of Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal is the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cult which we find well-set in the 12th century A. D., *i. e.*, from the time of Jayadeva of Gīta-Govinda fame. But it is not precisely known how early this cult found its way into Bengal. The earliest reference to the Kṛṣṇa-legend in Bengal is available in the sculptural representations

2. N. K. Bhattasali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, Dacca, 1929, p. xx.

3. Robert F. Bussabarger, *The Everyday Art of India*, New York, 1968, pp. 63-64.

at Paharpur in Rajshahi district. Rādhā is considered to be a Bengali innovation by many scholars.⁴ This Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cult however got further impetus in Bengal with the preachings of Śrī Caitanya in the 16th century A.D.⁵ Among the folk bronzes of Dacca Museum, the figures of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa form a major part. One such figure of Rādhā⁶ (Plate XLVII, fig. 1) is represented standing on a lotus pedestal in *dvibhaṅga* attitude. It is 20 inches in height. She has a well proportioned fleshy body with heavy bust and hip, a sensuous belly, a pointed nose and large eyes. Though apparently nude, it is made in such a way that she can be draped in *śāḍī*. There are perforations in her ears for suspending ear-rings. She has well-combed hair with a flat chignon behind her head (Plate XLVII, fig. 2). Her hair style and facial expression make her a typical Bengali lady. It can be dated to the early part of the 20th century A. D.

Another Rādhā image,⁷ 9 inches high, is of representative type. She is also standing in *dvibhaṅga* pose on a round pedestal with beaded decoration at the base. She has as her lower garment a *coli* and upper garment a blouse. She is bedecked with traditional ornaments in the neck, hands and waist. She is holding a lotus-bud in her right hand while the left is empty, and posed in dancing attitude. Her hands, palms and feet are rather disproportionate in comparison to her body. She possesses a smiling countenance, rounded eyes and unusually large ears with perforated ear-lobes. Her chignon is bound at the left side of her head in the form of a *cūḍā*. Though crude in execution, she is full of life and vigour showing a close ethnic affinity with the aboriginal *Sāntāl* women of Bengal. From stylistic grounds this can be dated to the 19th century A.D.

The Kṛṣṇa group of bronzes in the Dacca Museum collection can be divided into three main categories. They are (a) Nani-Gopāla, (b) Bāla-Gopāla and (c) Beṇu-Gopāla. The Nani-Gopāla or Nāḍu-Gopāla, as they are sometimes called, type of Kṛṣṇa has been a common theme in the traditional folk bronzes of Bengal. One of the representative types of Nani-Gopāla⁸ (Plate XLVII, fig. 3) holding a *nāḍu* in his right hand is crawling on the floor while the left hand which is placed on the ground appears to be holding a milk-pot. There are two folk interpretations of this theme. One is his stealing of *nani* (butter-made cake) while he was a crawling child. The other signifies his godhood when he holds the entire universe in the form of a ball in his hand. In the present case baby Kṛṣṇa is nude and devoid of any ornamentation. However, there are two holes in his ears as provision for ear-rings. His hair is tucked up in the form of a *uṣṇīṣa* over his head. Besides, there are many figures of Nani-Gopāla with profuse ornamentation in the Dacca Museum collection. They are mostly datable to the late 19th and early 20th centuries A. D.

4. R. C. Majumdar, ed., *History of Bengal*, vol. I, Dacca, 1943, pp. 403-404.

5. N. K. Bhattasali, *Annual Report of the Dacca Museum for 1939-40*, p. 7.

6. Dacca Museum Accession no. 70. 26.

7. Dacca Museum Accession no. 70. 87.

8. Dacca Museum Accession no. 71. 162.

Bāla-Gopāla images are of two kinds. They are either in the attitude of playing on flute or in the pose of dancing and in both cases they are invariably depicted nude. One such Bāla-Gopāla⁹ (Plate XLVII, fig. 4a) as playing on flute is standing in *tribhaṅga* attitude on a lotus pedestal. He is wearing a pair of wooden sandals in his feet. He has an ornamented girdle. His hair is tucked up on the fore of his head in the form of a three-tiered knob. His ears have two big holes for the use of rings. His hands are executed in the act of playing on flute. He has a pointed nose and large eyes. There is a certain naïvety in his smile. From the style of execution it can be assigned to the 19th century A.D. Yet another example¹⁰ of this group shows all the details like the earlier one except that he is bare-footed and has two necklaces. His countenance showing a majestic look has sharp pointed nose and large rounded eyes. Another noticeable departure that distinguishes it from the illustrated one is his hair style. His hair is arranged in the shape of a single knob from which protrudes a lotus-bud in the fore of his head. It can also be dated to the 19th century A.D. on stylistic ground.

The dancing Bāla-Gopāla is also a remarkable variety in the host of Kṛṣṇa images of Bengal. The illustrated Bāla-Gopāla¹¹ (Plate XLVII, fig. 4b) stands triumphantly on a round pedestal in dancing pose. His right leg is placed on a bloomed lotus probably showing his godhood. He holds in his right hand a ball, possibly a *nāḍu*, or the universe, while the left is empty. He has a beaded chain in his waist. With a sharp nose and beautiful large eyes his face exhibits a heavenly smile. The child-god has a round knob of hair on his head. This is a very well proportioned image done possibly by an artist who had knowledge of classical art. It is datable to the 19th century A. D. There is yet another variety of Bāla-Gopāla¹² in the same group. In this case the image shows all the details as the earlier one. But here the child-god stands on a lotus pedestal and he is profusely jewelled in his ankles, waist, wrists, arms, neck and ears. The striking difference between the former and the latter is that while the former holds a ball in his right hand the latter has nothing. The child-god in this case has a conical knob on his head. It can also be assigned to the 19th century A.D.

There is yet another beautiful example of Kṛṣṇa¹³ (Plate XLVII fig. 4c) which is 4½ inches high shows him in his manhood. This lone specimen is depicted in the act of playing on flute. He stands in the *tribhaṅga* pose on a lotus pedestal, wearing wooden sandals in his feet. He is pleasingly ornamented in profusion having cloth upto his ankles. One remarkable feature of this Kṛṣṇa image is his *vanamālā* which reaches upto his knees. The god has a conical *kiriṭa* with triangular designs on his head. His hair is bound at the back of his head

9. Dacca Museum Accession no. 70. 286.

10. Dacca Museum Accession no. 70. 86.

11. Dacca Museum Accession no. 71. 167.

12. Dacca Museum Accession no. 72. 245.

13. Dacca Museum Accession no. 71. 228.

in the shape of a chignon. With large round eyes, a sharp nose and a serene smile in his face, this image shows leaning towards classicism in execution, though certainly it was the creation of the folk artist of the 19th century A. D.

In the history of religious development in Bengal, Śivaism and Śaktism played a great role. Inscriptional evidences prove that from the 6th century A. D. onwards right upto the time of the Pālas, Candras and Senas these two sects of the Brahmanical faith had a significantly dominant part in Bengal side by side with Buddhism.¹⁴ The folk bronze collection of Dacca Museum contains a large number of such images of the Brahmanical faith of which mention can be made of a 9 inches high Kālī, the terrible aspect of Durgā.¹⁵ It is made of bronze. Here lord Śiva, the husband of goddess Kālī, is shown lying flat on a cot having *ūrdhvaliṅga* and *jaṭā-mukuṭa* which is surmounted by a hooded snake. He has *dhuturā* flowers as his ear ornament. Goddess Kālī is depicted striding over her husband. She is four-handed and in her four hands she shows *varada-mudrā* in the lower right hand and *abhaya-mudrā* in the upper right. But unfortunately attributes of both the left hands are missing which should have usually held a *khaḍga* in her upper left and a severed demon-head in the lower left. She is draped with human hands at her waist and has a garland made of human-heads around her neck. Tongue sticking out of mouth gives her a ferocious blood-thirsty look, yet this dramatic aspect of Kālī does not terrorize the onlooker. She has a designed *mukuṭa* as her head-dress. This type of Kālī image is very common in Bengal which has been the stronghold of Śaktism from the 12th century A.D.

There are also a number of Maḥiṣāsura-mardinī images which are more or less of the same type as above from the standpoint of style of execution, character and spirit. The one such image¹⁶ we shall discuss is ten-handed. She is standing and has placed her right leg on her carrier lion and the left leg on the back of the demon Maḥiṣāsura whom she is killing. In her eight hands she has her usual attributes and with her principal right hand she is piercing the chest of the demon with a spear while she has caught hold of the hair of the demon with her principal left hand. She is pleasingly ornamented and has a conical stela at her back. The image is placed on a four-footed rectangular pedestal. It is 4½ inches in height. Though it has a leaning towards the classical tradition, yet in its treatment, spirit, style and character, it is typically folk. This can be dated to the 19th century A. D.

The images of Viṣṇu in Dacca Museum collection though apparently seem to belong to the classical art tradition from the point of view of iconographic details, they are in fact very much folk in spirit, character and execution. These images are always depicted with four hands

14. R. C. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 404-407.

15. Dacca Museum Accession no. 71. 284.

16. Dacca Museum Accession no. 71. 142.

showing the usual attributes of *śaṅkha*, *cakra*, *gadā* and *padma*. Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī, the two consorts of Viṣṇu, are conspicuous by their absence in this type of folk bronzes. Viṣṇu images of folk origin are always represented standing on a simple two-tiered pedestal instead of a lotus one. In one such Viṣṇu image,¹⁷ the god is represented in profuse ornamentation having a conical *mukuṭa* as head-gear. In his four hands he holds the *cakra* in the lower right, *padma* in the upper right, *gadā* in the upper left and *śaṅkha* in the lower left. Also he has a conical stela at his back.

One very interesting bronze image in the collection of Dacca Museum is that of a Kārtikeya.¹⁸ The classical modelling and treatment have lent to this unique bronze image all the qualities a sculpture in the round has. It is a rare bronze as far as its theme is concerned, because images of Kārtikeya were very rarely attempted in Bengal in the past. It is 5 inches in height and depicted standing in *ālīḍha* pose with "right knee thrown in front and the leg retracted, while the left leg is firmly planted behind in a slanting position"¹⁹ on his *vāhana*, the peacock, which in its turn is depicted in walking attitude. Kārtikeya in this case is two-handed and his two hands, though empty, are shown as if shooting an arrow. Another interesting feature of the image is that it is represented with boots. With large eyes, a pointed nose and a sublime smile in the face, this image of Kārtikeya can be dated to the 19th century A. D.

The other interesting group of folk bronzes are the lamps of various types and shapes used mainly for ritualistic purposes. These lamps beautifully exemplify the assimilation of folk art into ritualistic art.

As is known, Nepal and South India have been the prolific lamp producing areas in the sub-continent. But the number of lamps with a large variety that we find in Bengal, we have every reason to believe that Bengal has also been one of the major lamp producing centres from the past. It is interesting to note that the lamps of Bengal have close similarity in respect of shape, form and character with those of Nepal, South India and some other places of the sub-continent. But this does not mean that the lamps were imported into Bengal from outside, at least the huge quantity of lamps that we find in Bengal does not suggest so.

The bronze-made lamps which we find in the collection of Dacca Museum can broadly be divided into the following main groups : (a) *Dīpa-Lakṣmī*,²⁰ (b) *Ārati-Dīpa*,²¹ (c) *Garuḍa-Dīpa*, (d) *Nāga-Dīpa*,²² (e) *Gaja-Dīpa*,²³ (f) *Nandī-Dīpa*, (g) *Siṃha-Dīpa*

17. Dacca Museum Accession no. 71. 186.

18. Dacca Museum Accession no. 71. 177.

19. R. C. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 475.

20. D. G. Kelkar, *Lamps of India*, Delhi, 1961, figs. 4. 64-65, 68 and 70.

21. *Ibid.*, figs. 6 and 25-41.

22. *Ibid.*, figs. 10, 26-27, 35, 37 and 40.

23. *Ibid.*, figs. 61 and 73-77.

and (h) *Gachā-Dīpa*,²⁴ etc. In our discussion of Bengal lamps we have selected only a few for the purpose of discussion and illustration out of a huge collection which requires a separate study. Most of these lamps vary in date from the 18th to the 20th centuries A. D.

Among the bronze lamps of the Dacca Museum collection the *Dīpa-Lakṣmī* type is note-worthy for the boldness of its execution. In this case a female figure stands on a round pedestal with *pañca-pradīpa* in her outstretched hands²⁵ (Plate XLVIII, fig. 5). This *pañcapradīpa* is flanked on either side by two special bowls for the burning of camphor. Profusely bejewelled she has a tiara or coronet on her head. She is dressed upto her ankles with a *colī* and has a blouse as her upper garment. In this type we find many local or regional characteristics in the execution of the female figures. The *Dīpa-Lakṣmī* sometimes holds *sapta-dīpa*, *nava-dīpa*, and even *ṣoḍaśa-dīpa*.

The next type is the *Ārati-Dīpa*. This type of lamp is generally represented by a group of receptacles held together by a handle at the back. Sometimes human figures, both male and female, are also used to hold the lamps. The illustrated *Ārati-Dīpa*²⁶ (Plate XLVIII, fig. 5) shows a king or a god standing erect on a square-shaped tapering lotus pedestal with *pañca-pradīpa* in hands. He is richly dressed with pleasing ornaments and has a crown on his head. A hooded snake over the head of the male figure forms the handle of the lamp. The *pañca-pradīpa* in the hands of the male figure also has special bowls for the burning of camphor.

Yet another major type that we find is the *Garuḍa-Dīpa*²⁷ (Plate XLVIII, fig. 5). In this type generally Garuḍa, the carrier of Viṣṇu, stands with folded hands on a round pedestal with octagonal or hexagonal base. The wings of Garuḍa are, in most cases, stretched wide and he holds the lamp-base supported by a long cylinder on his head. This type of lamp is used in the temple of Viṣṇu.

The *Nāga-Dīpa* variety of lamp shows a snake or Nāga as a handle holding three, five, seven or nine receptacles together at a time. The snake is always shown fanged. This type of lamp is used generally in the temple of Śiva.

The *Gaja-Dīpa* variety of lamp depicts an elephant in the minutest detail holding the lamp-stand on its body. Sometimes the elephant holds one or a group of receptacles in its trunk. This type is used in the temple of Gaṇeśa.

24. *Ibid.*, figs. 42-60.

25. Dacca Museum Accession no. 73. 809.

26. Dacca Museum Accession no. 73. 1429.

27. Dacca Museum Accession no. 73. 1688.

The *Nandi-Dīpa* or the bull-lamp is also one of the major types that we find among the Bengal lamps. Nandī, the bull who is the *vāhana* of Śiva is the holder of lamps or lamp-stand on its back. Normally the bull is shown carrying a round lamp-stand on its back²⁸ (Plate XLVIII, fig. 6). Almost in all cases the bull is depicted well decorated befitting the carrier of Lord Śiva.

The *Simha-Dīpa* or the lion-lamp is another variety that deserves notice. In this type of lamp the lion generally holds the lamp-stand on its back²⁹ (Plate XLVIII, fig. 6). In all cases it is shown in jumping posture. Sometimes it holds the trunk of an elephant which lies under its feet with its two front legs. The look of the lion is awe-inspiring with its tongue sticking out of the mouth. In some rare cases the tail of the lion is used as the handle. The lion-lamps are used in the temple of Durgā whose carrier the lion is. In this group another variety can be seen in a jumping leogryph. The well-built muscular leogryph is shown leaping forward holding a lamp-stand on its back and the entire figure is represented on a round pedestal³⁰ (Plate XLVIII, fig. 6).

Lastly, the *Gachā-Dīpa* or the *Dīpa-Dāna* is yet an elegant variety of lamp-stand that we come across among the Bengal lamps. *Gachā* is the word used typically in Bengal to indicate a long and slender lamp-stand. D. G. Kelkar calls this variety of lamps as standing lamps.³¹ The body of the stand is, in all cases, well decorated. The base of the *Gachā-Dīpa* is flat and circular having floral designs. These are used in all households as well as in temples.

The folk bronzes we have discussed have a vital and rich tradition through the ages. The folk art tradition which is known to be the background of the artistic development of a people certainly deserves a sympathetic understanding. They are, perhaps, the only tangible link between the various groups of people of Bengal from a remote past.

28. Dacca Museum Accession no. 73. 952.

29. Dacca Museum Accession no. 73. 1494.

30. Dacca Museum Accession no. 73. 1004.

31. D. G. Kelkar, *op. cit.*, figs. 42-60.



Fig. 1. Stone inscription from Sitalmat, Rajshahi, 652 A.H./1254-55 A.D., Dacca Museum Accession no. 68.89.



Fig. 2. Back view of the stone inscription from Sitalmat showing the designed motifs.

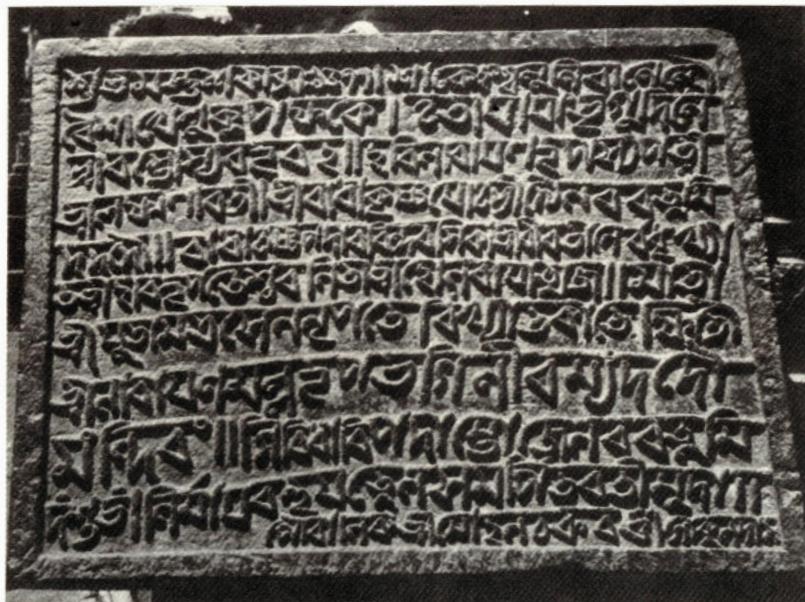


Fig. 1. Temple inscription, Candrakonā, Medinipur district.

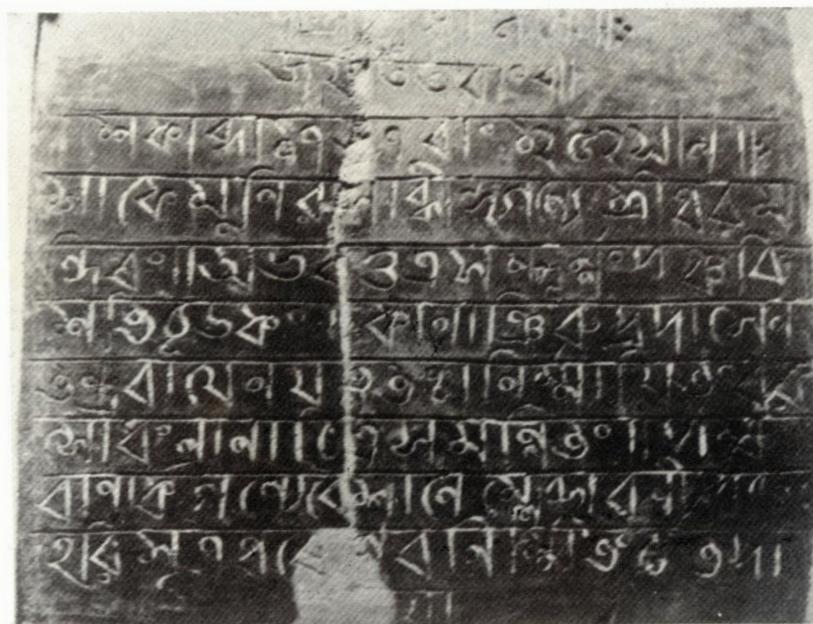


Fig. 2. Inscription of Sridhar Jiu temple, Sonāmukhi, Bankura.



Fig. 3. Inscription of Navaratna temple, Ganeshpur, Howrah.



Fig. 4. Inscription of Navaratna temple, Lowada, Medinipur.

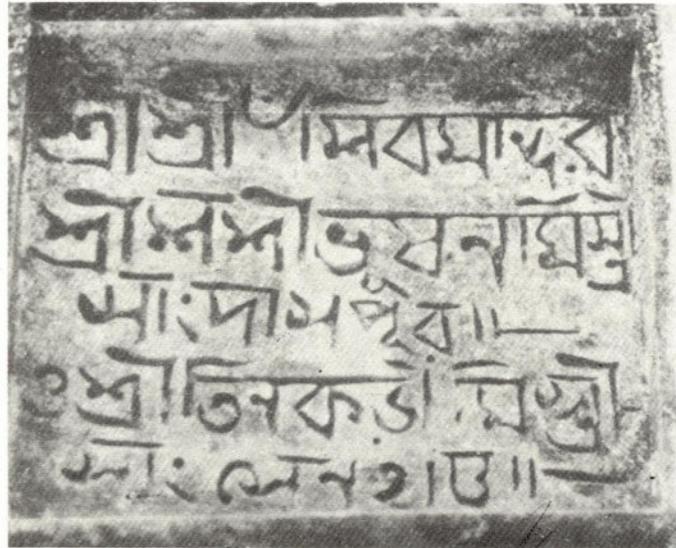


Fig. 5. Inscription of Kharar Śiva-mandir, Ghantal, Medinipur.



Fig. 6. Temple inscription in the collection of Jogesh Chandra Purākirti Bhavan, Vishnupur, Bankura.



Fig. 7. Inscription of Kṛṣṇarāya Jiu temple, Bhagalpur, Bankura.



Fig. 1. Vikramaśīla Mahāvihāra, view of *stūpa* from north.



Fig. 2. Vikramaśīla Mahāvihāra, view of *stūpa* from west.

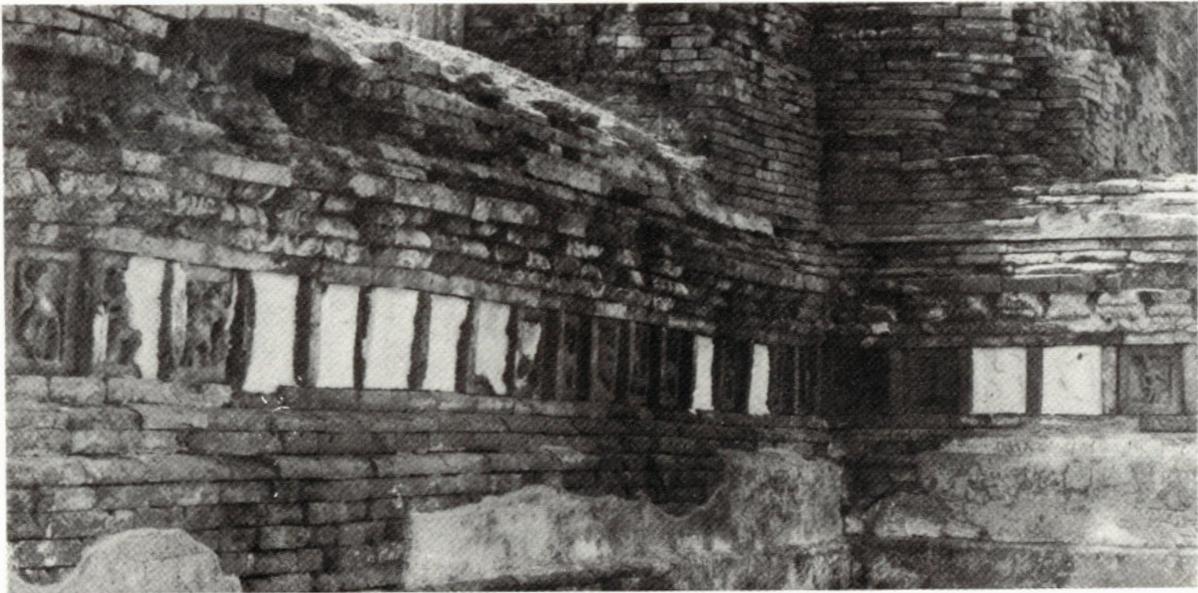


Fig. 3. Terracotta panels of northwest corner of *stūpa*. Panels covered with white under chemical conservation.



Fig. 4. Terracotta panels of northwest corner of *stūpa*.



Fig. 5. Terracotta panels of southwest corner of *stūpa*.



Fig. 6. Terracotta panels of northeast corner of *stūpa*.



Fig. 7. Terracotta panel of southeast corner of *stūpa*.



Fig. 8. Terracotta panel of northeast corner of *stūpa*.



Fig. 9. Nālandā, temple site no. 2, stone panels of *jagati-piṭha*.



Fig. 10. Pāhārpur, terracotta panels of basement level.



Fig. 11. Pāhārpur, terracotta panels of first terrace verandah.

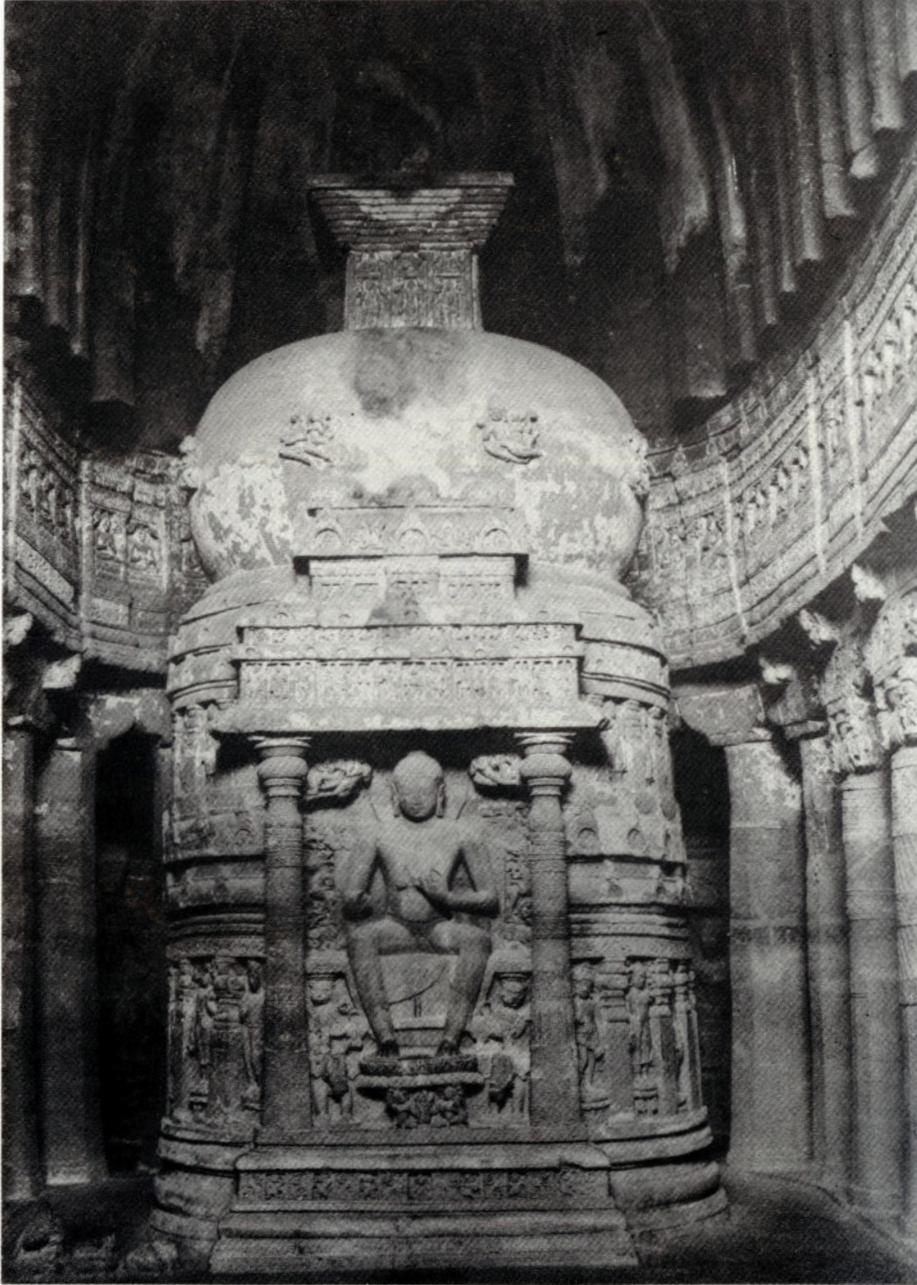


Fig. 12. Ajantā, Cave 26, interior view showing *stūpa*.



Fig. 1. Silver coins showing bull and tripartite symbol.



Fig. 2. Silver coins showing bull and tripartite symbol.

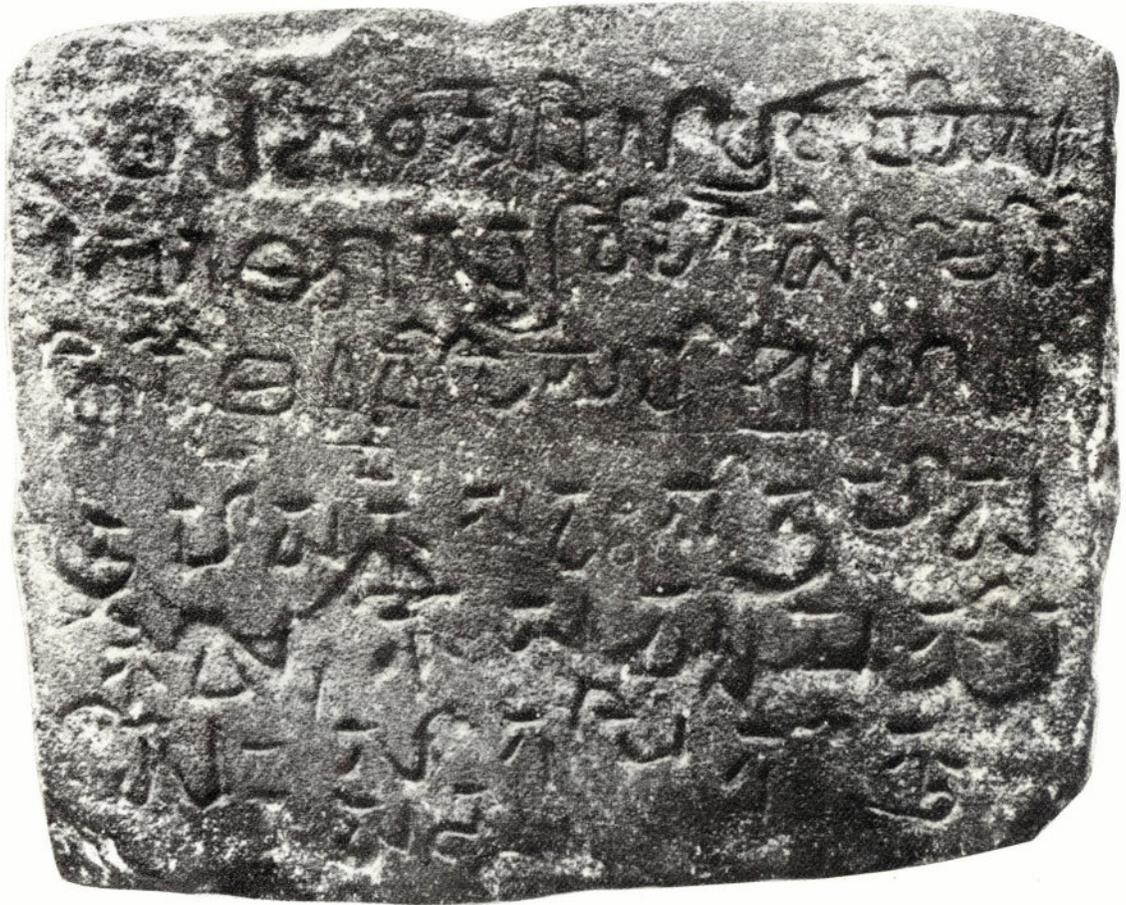


Fig. 3. Stone inscription, Sandoway, Arakan.



Fig. 1. Terracotta plaque showing tiger-hunt, Jorbānglā temple, Vishnupur, West Bengal.



Fig. 2. Terracotta plaque showing animal-hunt in large parties, Kāntanagar temple, Dinajpur.



Fig. 3. Terracotta panel showing hunting scenes, Pañca-ratna temple, Puthia, Rajshahi.



Fig. 4. Terracotta plaque showing animal-hunt in large parties, Rādhā-Govinda temple, Puthia, Rajshahi.



Fig. 5. Terracotta plaque showing hunting scene in small groups, collection of Asutosh Museum, Calcutta.

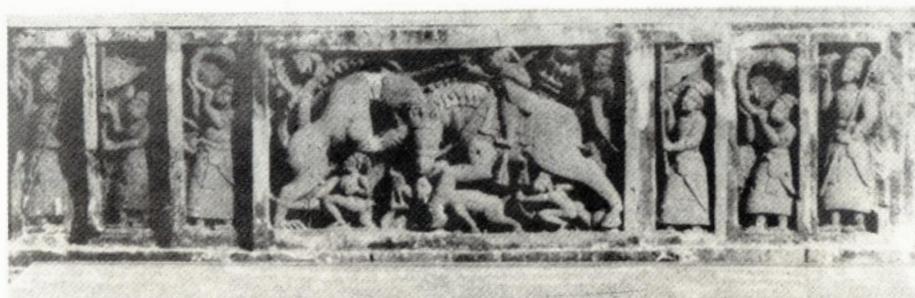


Fig. 6. Terracotta panel showing animal-hunt in small groups, Kāntanagar temple, Dinajpur.



Fig. 7. Terracotta panel showing scene of rhinoceros-hunt, Govinda temple, Puthia, Rajshahi.



Fig. 8. Terracotta panel showing a hunter on a decorated horse with a perched falcon in one hand and a bow in the other, Kāntanagar temple, Dinajpur.



Fig. 9. Terracotta plaque showing a group of men armed with guns and accompanied by hunting dogs, Rādhā-Govinda temple, Antpur, West Bengal.



Fig. 10. Terracotta panel showing the chief hunter on horse-back accompanied by armed *pāiks* and *pāṅkhābardārs* with large fans, Kāntanagar temple, Dinajpur.



Fig. 11. Terracotta panel showing hunter on elephant and an attendant carrying the falcon, Kāntanagar temple, Dinajpur.



Fig. 12. Terracotta plaque showing European hunters shooting at a large scaly animal, Kāntanagar temple, Dinajpur.

Fig. 13. Terracotta panel showing leopard-hunt by European hunters, Govinda-Vallabha Jiu temple, Tilandpara, Midnapore, West Bengal.



Fig. 14. Terracotta panel showing tiger-hunt by European hunters with spears, Dāmodar temple, Amaragari, Howrah, West Bengal.



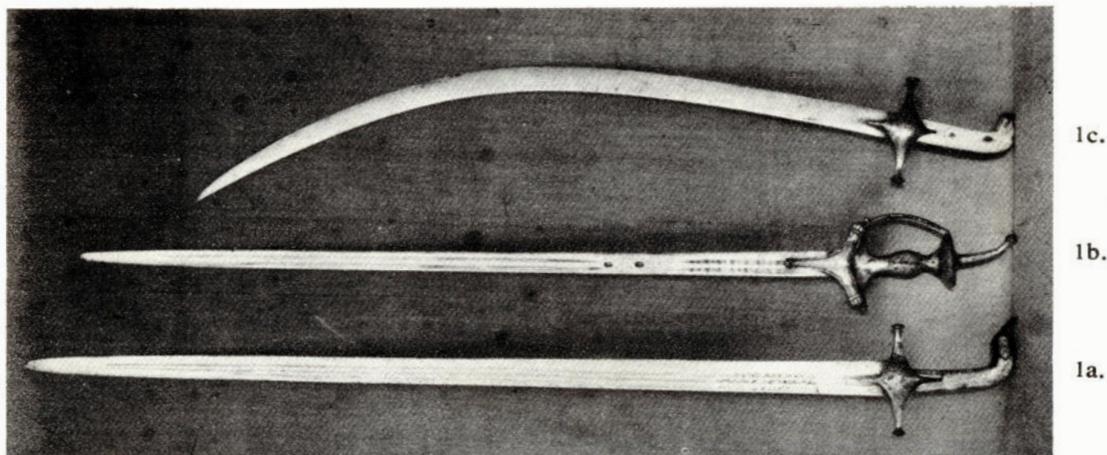


Fig. 1a. Sword of Nawāb Sirāj-ud-daulah, Dacca Museum, Accession no. B1752.

Fig. 1b. A *Firangi*, Dacca Museum, Accession no. B 1690.

Fig. 1c. A *Shamshir*, Dacca Museum, Accession no. B 1919.



Fig. 2. One face of the blade of the sword of Nawāb Sirāj-ud-daulah showing his name inscribed in Arabic.

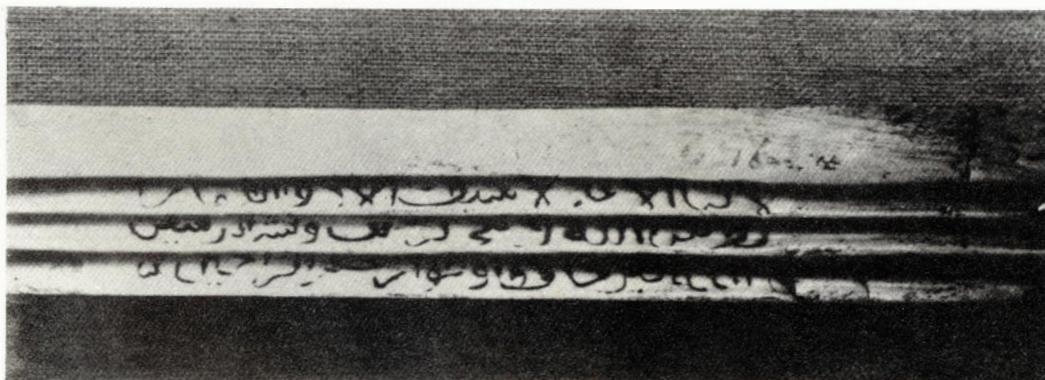


Fig. 3. The other face of the blade of the sword of Nawāb Sirāj-ud-daulah showing an Arabic inscription.



Early terracottas of Tāmralipta, left to right :

First Row :

1. Head surmounted by coils of hair, terracotta, c. 3rd cent. B. C.
2. Yakṣiṇī, pañcacūḍā, terracotta plaque, c. 2nd cent. B. C.
3. Standing Yakṣiṇī with elaborate coiffure, terracotta plaque, c. 2nd cent. B. C.

Second Row :

1. Female face with rosette decorations on terracotta plaque with beaded rim, fragment, c. 2nd century A. D.
2. Male-face with conical headgear or cap, terracotta plaque, small fragment, c. 2nd cent. A. D.

Third Row :

1. Anthropomorphic pottery fragment, terracotta, c. 1st. cent A. D. (?)
2. Face with elaborate coiffure and heavy earrings, terracotta, c. 1st cent. A. D.
3. Figurine showing pinched up technique, terracotta (primitive ageless type).

Fourth Row :

1. Standing male figure, terracotta, c. 4th-5th cent. A. D.
2. Turbaned figurine, terracotta, c. early 2nd cent. A. D.
3. Group of elephants standing in a row, terracotta. c. late 1st cent. A. D.



Fig. 1. Manasā, black stone, from Dinajpur district. Dacca Museum.



Fig. 2. Manasā, black stone, from North Bengal. Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi.



Fig. 3. Manasā, brass, from Rajshahi district. Indian Museum, Calcutta.



Fig. 4. Manasā, black stone, from Khidrapalli (Rajshahi).
Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi.



Fig. 1. Rādhā in bronze, Dacca Museum.



Fig. 2. Rādhā in bronze showing her hair-do, Dacca Museum.



Fig. 3. Nani-Gopāl in bronze holding a nādu, Dacca Museum.



Fig. 4. Kṛṣṇa images in bronze, Dacca Museum.



Fig. 5. Traditional lamps of Bangladesh, Dacca Museum.



Fig. 6. Traditional lamps of Bangladesh, Dacca Museum.

BOOK REVIEW

QEYAMUDDIN AHMAD : *CORPUS OF ARABIC AND PERSIAN INSCRIPTIONS OF BIHAR (A. H. 640-1200)*, K. P. Jayasawal Research Institute, Patna, 1973, pp. xxxii + 418, 77 pls., map.

The history of Bihar had many ups and downs, for its destiny was controlled in course of several centuries by the rulers of Delhi, Jaunpur and Bengal. It is, therefore, quite natural that the inscriptions issued by these rulers are of a wide variety. The present *Corpus* together with such works as *Bibliography of the Muslim Inscriptions of Bengal* (down to 1538 A. D.) by A. H. Dani and *Inscriptions of Bengal*, vol. IV by Shamsuddin Ahmed provide the student of epigraphy with a rich storehouse of archaeological materials which otherwise remain either unnoticed or buried in numerous journals and books. We are now in a fortunate position to say that the works like *Gaur : Its Ruins and Inscriptions* by J. H. Ravenshaw have been rendered obsolete by the epigraphic studies carried out in the recent past. It is, of course, true that these studies would have been hardly possible but for the pioneering works of the earlier scholars who have prepared the ground for compiling the volume under notice. As a matter of fact, the growth of Muslim epigraphy in India as an auxiliary science is largely the by-product of the Department of Archaeological Survey established by the Government of India in the nineteenth century. Epigraphic records were, at the initial stage, discovered, deciphered and published by the scholars like Cunningham, Blochmann, Ravenshaw, Horowitz and Paul Horn who were later joined by R. D. Banerji, Yazdani, Stapleton, Shamsuddin Ahmed and others and the work is being continued by the present generation of scholars. Thus it is quite natural that Qeyamuddin Ahmad has quite frequently expressed his indebtedness to the earlier epigraphists by mentioning their valuable contributions.

The author has put us all in his debts by publishing the present volume of Bihar inscriptions. Historically and linguistically, the whole of eastern India including Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh forms a single unit. Very often these regions were under the control of a single dynasty. Even when Bihar emerged as an independent province under the Mughals, it enjoyed no doubt a distinct status ; but often its fate became linked up with Bengal, for the rulers were apt to place Bengal, Bihar and Orissa under one governorship. For writing the history of entire Eastern India or of Bengal or Bihar, the present *Corpus* has become an indispensable work of reference. Dani and Shamsuddin Ahmed have each taken notice of certain inscriptions issued by the Bengal Sultāns from the different parts of Bihar. But Qeyamuddin Ahmad has added to our knowledge by publishing a few more inscriptions and considerably improving upon the texts established by other scholars.

The *Corpus* includes inscriptions of the Sultāns of Delhi and Bengal and also those issued during the Sharqī and Mughal rule. The records representing each regional kingdom or dynasty show their own peculiarities. Thus the epigraphs of the Sharqī and Mughal rulers have an intense tendency for versification which is almost absent in the inscriptions of the Bengal Sultāns. Again there is a certain stylistic difference which characterises the epigraphs issued under different dynasties. Bengal stands out conspicuous for the different kinds of the *Ṭughrā* style which seems almost absent in the inscriptions of the rulers from other regions. This country cannot, of course, claim monopoly of this style, for it is found in some of the monuments at the capital cities of Agra and Delhi and also in some of the epigraphic records of Gujrat and Golconda. But many of the Bengal epigraphs show the finest development of the style. The Sharqī and the so-called Pathan inscriptions included in the work under review show the *Naskh* and *Thulth* styles. Some of the inscriptions of the Sultāns of Bengal, of course, exhibit the *Naskh*. Again the elongated shafts of the vertical letters in some other epigraphs assume either the dagger shape or the tip of an arrow. In these cases, it is reasonable to hold that the epigraphs showing the above characteristics indicate a phase of transition from one style to the other ; but Qeyamuddin Ahmad has failed to notice these subtleties and called them *Naskh* perhaps following the general formula of straight and curved lines, which is used as a definition of a particular style. But all this may be dismissed as minor things in the *Corpus* which is not after all a work on calligraphy.

The Mughal rule is fortunate in having a good number of chronicles which are available also for some regional kingdoms. Bengal does not have written chronicles excepting those produced in the late Mughal period. Thus the administrative units and honorary titles found in Bengal epigraphs help us largely in visualising the external frame-work of the administrative system that obtained in the country. But the Sharqī or Mughal epigraphic records have hardly similar terms or titles. In these inscriptions the present reviewer can notice only a few such terms as *Iqtā'*, *Khitta*, *Shiq* and *Muqta'*. In this respect Bengal inscriptions bear striking resemblance to those executed under the Sultāns of Gujrat (cf ; M. A. Chagtai, "Muslim Monuments of Ahmadabad Through Their Inscriptions", *Bulletin of the Deccan College Institute*, 1941-42, vol. III, pp. 107-109, 111-12, 128-30, 136, 138-139, 141-43, etc., and *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, 1958, p. 210.). We have hardly any reason to underestimate the importance of other inscriptions included in the book under review. These records throw sufficient light on the administrative, cultural and political conditions obtaining in Bihar in the periods covered by them. Qeyamuddin Ahmad has made them more useful by adding profuse historical notes on the places and personalities mentioned therein. The historian dealing with the Mughal period, may not attach much importance to the epigraphic records profusely produced as a result of the intense architectural activities of the rulers, for his hands are full of literary materials. But the Mughal inscriptions have their own value. Although stylistically more stereotyped than the Bengal or Gujrat inscriptions, these mural records definitely reflect the cultural conditions prevailing in the long Mughal period. Numerically the Mughal inscriptions dominate the *Corpus* and the Sharqī period is represented by only seven inscriptions. Although the Sharqī rulers were

great builders of edifices of a wide variety, the fury of the Lūdi conquerors was largely responsible for their destruction. This historical phenomenon explains the paucity of the Sharqī inscriptions.

As noticed by the author, the pieces of historical information revealed by the Patna inscription of Ḥusain dated 916 A. H./1510-11 A. D. and the Barh inscription of the same ruler taken together with the Bihar-Sharif inscription of 901 A. H./1496 A. D. do not seem to be compatible (pp. 110-113 and 123). The Bhagalpur inscription of Ḥusain bearing the name of Khurshīd Khān has been correlated by the writer with other Ḥusainī epigraphs which mention the name of the same officer (p. 95). Two inscriptions of Kaikā'us Shāh (pp. 10-11) showing such titles as *Yamīn-i-Khalīfatullāh* and *Nāṣir-i-Amīr al-Mū'minīn* indicate that the Sulṭān was anxious to show his theoretical relationship with the *Khilāfat* without receiving a diploma of investiture. The bi-inscriptional slab of Shams al-Dīn Fīrūz exhibiting Indian gods and goddesses (pp. 15-19) shows that it was removed from either a ruined or intact temple—a fact which indicates the religious intolerance and lack of political wisdom of the ruler. There is both literary and epigraphic evidence to show that Tirhut though temporarily occupied by Fīrūz Tughluq, had come under the control of Ilyās, Bārbak and the Ḥusainshāhī rulers of Bengal. (cf. M. R. Tarafdar : *Husain Shahi Bengal*, Dacca, 1965, pp. 7-9 and 69 ; Q. Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 25). The Bihar-Sharif inscription of Muḥammad bin Tughluq (dated 737 A. H./1336-7 A. D.) clearly shows that he had assumed the title of *Khalīfah*, although under the pressure of the circumstances he had to procure a diploma of investiture from Mustakfi-bi'llah, the pseudo-Abbasid Caliph of Egypt (*Tārīkh-i-Fīrūzshāhī*, p. 492). The Tughluq hold on Bihar even in the period of decline is evidenced by the discovery of the Bihar-Sharif inscription of Muḥammad Tughluq dated in 792 A. H./1389-90 A. D. Qeyamuddin Ahmad has adduced sufficient reasons in support of this political phenomenon (pp. 64-65). As already indicated, the Sharqī period is inadequately represented. Although the author has included in the *Corpus*, the Bihar-Sharif inscription of Maḥmūd Shāh dated in 847 A. H./1443 A. D. he has not noticed the coins of Ibrāhīm Sharqī bearing the date 847 A. H. (Mian Muhammad Saeed, *The Sharqī Sultanate of Jaunpur : a Political & Cultural History*, Karachi, 1972, p. 294 citing *Catalogues* by Lane-Poole and Wright) and also the coins of Maḥmūd “dated in sequence from 844 A. H.”

Two of the five sections of the *Corpus* include Bihar inscriptions of the Bengal Sulṭāns supplementing the works on the epigraphic records of Bengal already published. It is interesting to note that the Bhagalpur inscription of Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd contains the significant regal title “*Khalīfah* of Allah by proof and evidence” (p. 97). The undated Begusarai inscription of Nuṣrat (p. 115) confirms the view that he was called Nāṣir Shāh as well, a name appearing in the accounts of the *Tārīkh-i-Muḥammadī* and the *Ṭabaqāt-i-Akbarī*. The Purnia inscription of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maḥmūd dated 4 Dhū'l Qa'da, 943 A. H. is perhaps the last epigraphic record of the Sulṭān (pp. 117-18). The bi-lingual inscription of Sher Shāh dated in 948 Śaka corresponding to 948 A. H./1542 A. D. is sociologically significant, for it indicates a process of *rapprochement* between the Hindus and the

Muslims. Epigraphs issued in Sanskrit by the Muslim rulers are quite rare. At present I can remember the Sanskrit inscription of Dhorail of the reign of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maḥmūd dated in 1533 A. D. (Shamsuddin Ahmed, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, vol IV, Rajshahi, 1960, p. 237, fig 49). The rulers of the Sūr dynasty were of course minting coins with Hindi legends inscribed in the Devanāgarī script. A kind of linguistic adaptability is indicated by the inscription issued during the governorship of Mansingh. Its text arouses curiosity : *Parūhit sarīdar dāroghah balbhadar zunnārdār ṣana'tqār ustād Mubārak* (p. 117, pl. 40b) "Priest Śrīdhar, Daroghah Bālbhadra, thread-bearer (or Brahmin), architect Ustād Mubārak." Thus the above will have given an idea about the historical importance of the epigraphic records included in the work under review.

We like to notice once again the artistic characteristics of some of the inscriptions. The elongated shafts together with the preposition *fi*, in fig. 18a may be regarded as indicating a phase of transition between *Ṭughrā* and *Thulth* shown by the dagger-shape of the shafts and *fi* is a Hooded-Serpent motif usually found in the *Ṭughrā* inscriptions called also the Swan Type. The style of writing represented by the fig. 19a is *Naskh* or *Thulth* with the slight influence of the Hooded-Serpent motif. Fig 19c shows the *Naskh* style. Fig. 21a shows the Bow and Arrow Type of *Ṭughrā*, although arrows are yet to attain a proper shape. 22c has the Arrows and Bows of the *Ṭughrā* and 23c may be regarded as a plain type of *Ṭughrā*. Fig. 23d and 17a show signs of *Naskh*. Pl. 74 illustrating an inscription of Akbar's reign dated in 967/1559-60 exhibits the *Naskh* style greatly affected by the Bow and Arrow Type of *Ṭughrā* as represented by the shafts tipped as arrows and some curved letters intertwining with the elongated shafts.

It is yet to be established whether the territorial extent or technical significance implied by the terms like *Iqtā'* and *Khitta* (p. 87) is identical with that of *Sūbah* and whether the technical terms *Sar-i-Lashkar* has the same nuance as *Sar-i-Khail* (p. 104). The author has used the term 'Pathan' without adding any qualifying notes. It can be believed that the word گمٹ (p. 141) is a misprint of گنبد . The date 908 A. H. can never correspond to 1508 A. D. About *Shāhzādā Dāniyāl* (pp. 100-101) recently some more facts have been discovered (S. Digby, 'The Fate of Dāniyāl, Prince of Bengal, in the light of an unpublished inscription', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental & African Studies*, XXXVI, 1973, pl. 3, p. 588 ff.). The Munghyr inscription dated in 903 A. H./1497-98 A. D. is the earliest epigraphic record of Ḥusain, not the Saran inscription dated in 906 A. H./1501 A. D. The author does not seem to have come across *Bibliography of the Muslim Inscriptions of Bengal* (Appendix, *J. A. S. P.* vol. II, 1957, Dacca) although it has a direct bearing on Bengal and Bihar inscriptions.

Minor mistakes pointed out, or difference of opinion expressed by us, does not in any way affect the positive value of the work which has the qualities of a *magnum opus*.

M. R. Tarafdar.

S. K. SARASWATI : *EIGHTEENTH CENTURY NORTH INDIAN PAINTING*, Pilgrim Publishers, Calcutta, 1969 pp. vi+30, colour plates, price Rs. 15.00

The monograph has grown out of a lecture delivered in the Seminar on "Eighteenth Century India" held in 1965 at the Jadabpur University. Starting with an account of the decadence of the Mughal painting which coincided with the disintegration of the Mughal state, the author goes on to show how the different offshoots of the Mughal school such as the Delhi, Patna, Murshidabad and Lucknow *qalams* and the Rājasthānī style in its several ramifications and also the Pāhārī style had a profusion of expressions in the different parts of North India. In the concluding part of the work it has been asserted that "no new movement resulted from this contact with western modes and techniques" (p.17) and the failure is attributed to the 'definitely contrasting' artistic traditions of the East and the West which had no mutual understanding.

In a monograph of this type one can reasonably expect a brief resumé of the characteristic features of the Mughal school which contains Indo-Persian and Western elements and traditions ; but the author abruptly begins his lecture with a pointed reference to the decaying conditions of the Mughal rule. One may also object to the use of the term 'Rājasthānī' which the writer has unconsciously identified with the Rājput paintings. As a matter of fact, the Rājput and Pāhārī schools are but the by-products of the Mughal school. The Rājasthānī school, which originated long before the coming of the Mughals, had absorbed a good deal of elements from the west Indian, Gujrāṭī or Apabhramśa style. We may refer in this connection to Karl Khandalavala's paper entitled "The Origin and Development of Rājasthānī Painting" (*Marg*, XI, 1958.2) in which the relevant problem has been discussed. We may mention also the specimens of the illustrations of the *Candāin* in the Bhārat Kalā Bhavan and the Lahore and Chandigarh Museums and also those from Jaunpur. The explanatory notes on the plates (pp. 22-25) are of value.

M. R. Tarafdar.

S. K. SARASWATI : *INDIAN ART AT THE CROSS-ROADS*, Pilgrim Publishers, Calcutta, 1973, pp. viii+80, 19 pls, price Rs. 60.00.

The present monograph has been written with a definite end in view. There are critics who believe that the art movement which took place in Bengal at the beginning of the present century, was retrogressive and revivalist in character. The author views the decline of architecture and painting in the eighteenth and nineteenth century India against a wide historical perspective and comes to the conclusion that "Judged in this light the Bengal movement may be found to be of supreme importance for the emergence of modern art

movement in India.” The movement in the field of painting was concerned with exploring the past artistic heritage on which the artists could find a firm footing and discover the traditions of the country. This was also necessary for opening the way for new aspirations and giving shape to new artistic forms and ideas. While formulating the above hypothesis, the author has briefly discussed the school of painting founded by Abanindra Nath Tagore and also the contributions of Jamini Roy and Rabindra Nath. The lecture on *Eighteenth Century Indian Painting* reviewed above has been completely incorporated in the present monograph and the narration of the conditions in the world of Indian pictorial art continued down to the middle of the present century.

The author maintains that the western architectural traditions, though introduced sporadically in the country, could not make any tangible impression upon the Indian architecture that came into being immediately after the disintegration of the Mughal school. But the Victoria Memorial Hall in Calcutta and the buildings of New Delhi constructed in the early part of the present century “ably demonstrate how Occidental designs may be organically blended with Indian environment and imbued with an Indian feeling.”

While discussing the brick temple of Bengal, S. K. Saraswati refers to *cālā* and *Bāṅglā* types and connects the latter with the thatched hut. The origin of these types of architecture can be traced back to the Sulṭāni and late Mughal periods when buildings with curved cornice and battlements and *caucālā* elements and even separate *docālā* structures began to be constructed by the Muslim builders. When the author says that Humāyūn’s tomb or the mausoleum of *Khān-i-Khānān* is the prototype of Şafdar Jang’s tomb, the observation contains an element of over-simplification. The tomb of Şafdar Jang belongs to the tradition which brought into being not only the structures mentioned above, but also the tomb of I’timad-ud-daulah and the famous Tajmahal. The corner towers of the tomb of Şafdar Jang seem to have been inspired by the thick and squat corner towers of the mausoleum of I’timad-ud-daulah.

It can be justly said that the author has been successful in viewing Indian art in a clear historical perspective.

M. R. Tarafdar

A BRIEF ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DACCA MUSEUM FOR 1974-75

1. DACCA MUSEUM BOARD OF TRUSTEES :

During the year 1974-75 the following persons were on the Board of Trustees of the Dacca Museum :

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. Prof. Abdul Matin Chaudhury
Vice-Chancellor, Dacca University. | Chairman |
| 2. Prof. A. B. M. Habibullah
President
The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh. | Trustee |
| 3. Prof. A. K. Nazmul Karim
Chairman
Department of Sociology, D. U. | Trustee |
| 4. Dr. S. M. Imamuddin
Chairman
Deptt. of Islamic History & Culture, D. U. | Trustee |
| 5. Dr. Nilima Ibrahim
Chairman
Department of Bengali, D. U. | Trustee |
| 6. Mr. Wadudur Rahman
Chairman
Department of History, D. U. | Trustee |
| 7. Dr. Mohammad Ishaque
Chairman
Department of Arabic, D. U. | Trustee |
| 8. Mr. A. K. M. Zakaria
Secretary
Cultural Affairs Division
Ministry of Education, C. A. & Sports. | Trustee |
| 9. Dr. Nazimuddin Ahmed
Director of Archaeology
Government of Bangladesh, Dacca. | Trustee |

10.	Dr. Mazharul Islam Director-General Bangla Academy, Dacca.	Trustee
11.	Mr. Syed Shafiqul Hossain Principal Bangladesh College of Arts & Crafts, Dacca.	Trustee
12.	Lt. Col. Heshamuddin Ahmed Administrator Dacca Municipality, Dacca.	Trustee
13.	Mr. Hafizur Rahman 141 Segunbagicha, Dacca.	Trustee
14.	Mr. Ashraf Ali Chowdhury 26 Purana Paltan Lane, Dacca.	Trustee
15.	Mr. Ganesh Chandra Chakravarty 24 Larmini Street, Dacca-1.	Trustee
16.	Mr. Quamrul Hasan Director Cottage Industries Corporation, Dacca.	Trustee
17.	Dr. Enamul Haque Director Dacca Museum.	Secretary

II. ESTABLISHMENT :

(a) The following staff remained unchanged :

Director : Dr. Enamul Haque, M. A. (Dac), D. Phil. (Oxon), F. M. A. (London) ;
Assistant Keepers : Mr. Firoz Mahmud, M. A. and Mr. R. K. Sarma, M. A. ; Research
Assistant : Mr. Muhammad Nizamuddin, M. A. ; Display Officer : Mr. Mohammed
Mohsin, B. F. A. ; Administrative Officer-cum-Accountant : Mr. M. A. Malek, B. Com. ;
and U. D. Assistant : Mr. M. A. Ghani.

(b) Mr. Iqbal Ahmed and Mr. Harun-ur-Rashid Sikder, Assistant Chemists, resigned on 25. 9. 1974 and 6. 11. 1974 respectively. Mr. S. A. M. Monowar Jahan, M. Sc. and Mr. Amiya Ratan Ghatak Ray, M. Sc., joined the Dacca Museum in their places, on 19. 11. 1974 and 20. 11. 1974 respectively. Mr. Shafiqul Asghar, Exploration Assistant, resigned on 4. 8. 1974. Mr. Atiqur Rahman joined the Dacca Museum as Accounts Clerk-cum-Typist on 20. 11. 1974. Mr. Manir Hossain, Stenographer, resigned on 18. 11. 1974.

(c) During the year the Museum employed one Motor Car Driver. Four new Gallery Attendants joined in places of two resigned and two dismissed. One Night Guard was dismissed and replaced.

- (d) Till 30. 6. 1975 the total sanctioned posts of the Museum were :
- 1 Director, 2 Assistant Keepers, 2 Research Assistants, 1 Display Officer, 2 Assistant Chemists, 1 Administrative Officer-cum-Accountant, 1 Assistant Librarian, 1 Stenographer, 1 U. D. Assistant, 2 Guide, Lecturers 1 Photographer-cum-Developer-Printer, 1 Accounts Clerk-cum-Typist, 2 Motor Drivers, 2 Office Assistants, 1 Head Darwan, 1 Electric Mistry, 1 Carpenter, 16 Gallery Attendants, 3 Night Guards, 1 Sweeper-Cleaner and 2 Gardeners.
- (e) Dr. Enamul Haque, Director, visited various museums, monuments and archaeological sites in India for one month from 5th October to 5th November 1974 as a guest of the Government of India. He also paid four visits to Calcutta between December 1974 and May 1975 in connection with the acquisition of a rich collection of old and rare books on art and archaeology for the Museum. On one occasion, he accompanied Mr. A. K. M. Zakaria, Additional Secretary, Cultural Affairs and Sports Division of the Government of Bangladesh (a Trustee), to Calcutta, and Mr. Md. Nizamuddin, Research Assistant, accompanied the Director on two occasions. Invited by the Asian Agency of ICOM, Dr. Haque also attended a four-day Seminar at New Delhi on Museum Architecture and Conservation in south and south-east Asia from 6th to 9th March, 1975.
- (f) Mr. Firoz Mahmud, Assistant Keeper, returned from the United States on completion of his in-service training in museology under a JDR 3rd Fund Fellowship for seven months. On his way back home, he visited Canada, Portugal, France, England, West Germany and Egypt.
- (g) Mr. S. A. M. Monowar Jahan and Mr. Amiya Ratan Ghatak Ray, Assistant Chemists, left for India in December, 1974 for training in Conservation for nine months in the UNESCO Conservation Centre at New Delhi under a programme supported by the Ford Foundation.

III. FINANCE :

During the year 1974-75, the Museum had the following income :

Interest from Fixed Deposits.	Tk.	23,714.68
Development grant from the Government.	Tk.	5,00,000.00
Grant-in-aid from the Government.	Tk.	5,00,000.00
Grant-in-aid from Dacca University.	Tk.	7,000.00
Special grant from Dacca Municipality.	Tk.	81,000.00
Other sources.	Tk.	28,589.88

The Museum incurred an expenditure of Tk. 5, 04, 099. 92 and Tk. 5, 62, 126. 86 for recurring (revenue) and development purposes, respectively.

IV. ASSISTANCE FROM EXTERNAL SOURCES :

- (a) During the year under report the Ford Foundation made a grant of \$ 1, 50, 500 to the Dacca Museum, with the approval of the Government, to set up a Conservation Laboratory and embark upon a public educational programme. The Conservation Laboratory being set up in the Dacca Museum plans to extend its services to other museums and private collections.
- (b) Still another major grant from an external source came from Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti, Calcutta, which, with the approval of the Government of Bangladesh, made available a sum of Indian Rs. 2, 00, 000 to purchase a collection of rare and out-of-print books and journals from India, numbering 8, 143 volumes.

V. DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME :

- (a) On 8th February, 1975 the Project Evaluation Committee of the Planning Commission decided to recommend Tk. 31. 2 million development scheme of the Dacca Museum for approval by the National Economic Council.
- (b) The National Museum Commission appointed during the previous year completed its report and submitted the same to the Government of Bangladesh. It was unanimously recommended that the Dacca Museum would be the National Museum of Bangladesh retaining its statutory autonomous character.

VI. ACQUISITIONS :

During 1974-75 the Museum acquired 827 objects bearing Accession Nos. from 74.187 to 74.235 and from 75.1 to 75.752.

Special mention should be made of five unique antiquities in wood, believed to be of the 11th century A. D., discovered at village Uttar Kazi Kasba in the Munshiganj Sub-Division of the Dacca District. These are architectural members probably from a lost palace or temple which once stood there. The find-spot falls within the Vikrampur area. Vikrampur was the capital of the Khaḍgas, Candras and Senas of East Bengal till the coming of the Muslims in the 13th Century A. D.

The wooden artifacts are described below :

- (1) Pillar with square base, tapering towards top. The shaft is octagonal and variously carved with floral and figural motifs. H. 153½" ; W. 27½" Accession No. 75. 294.
- (2) Pillar exquisitely carved with a life-size *Dvārapālikā* in *atibhaṅga* in the centre. At the top is a *Gandharva* dancing with a *mandirā* in his hands. H. 150" ; W. 14". Accession No 75. 295.

- (3) Pillar exquisitely carved with a life-size *Dvārapālikā* in *atibhaṅga* in the centre. At the top is a dancing *Vidyādhara* with a garland in his hands. Very much worn-out. H. 150" ; W. 13½". Accession No. 75. 296.
- (4) Top part of a *Śikhara* temple with crowning *āmalaka*. H. 20". Accession No. 75. 597.
- (5) Rectangular panel profusely carved with a life-size female figure, probably a *Surasundarī*, standing in *atibhaṅga* with a parrot in her right hand under the trefoil niche of a tall *Śikhara* temple. The damsel is bedecked with various ornaments. H. 59" ; W. 17". Accession No. 75. 298.

Of the 827 objects, only 16 were received as gifts. A sum of Tk. 68, 991. 94 was spent for the acquisition of object.

The details of 827 objects are given below :

Sculpture (stone)	100
Sculpture (metal)	8
Architectural member (stone)	1
Architectural member (wood)	5
wooden panel	5
Coin (gold)	9
Coin (silver)	274
Coin (copper)	57
Medal	1
Copper-plate inscription	2
Terracotta figurine/head/plaque	16
Designed brick	15
Pottery	4
Prehistoric iron axe	4
Prehistoric necklace of stone beads	3
Metalware	5
Glassware	1
Stoneware	1
Porcelain	1
Sword	2
Elephant-tusk	1
Embroidered quilt	1
Ornament	4
Mould for ornaments/cakes/sweets	245
Chandelier	1
Painting	1
Document/Manuscript/Rare printed book	58
Memento	2

827

VII. LIBRARY :

During the year 1974-75 over 9000 volumes were added to the library, the largest number for any particular year. This brought the total holdings to nearly 16,000. The 8,143 volumes of rare and old books purchased from India out of a grant of Indian Rs. 2 lacs from the Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti are important additions. Books were also donated by the British Council, Ford Foundation and Asia Foundation. The Museum spent Taka 14,490.50 for books bought locally.

VIII. SPECIAL ACTIVITIES :

A seminar on 'the Role of Museum in Education' was organized by the Dacca Museum on April 13, 1975. The seminar was presided over by Prof. Abdul Matin Chaudhury, Vice-Chancellor of the Dacca University and Chairman of the Dacca Museum Board of Trustees. Dr. Azizur Rahman Mallick, Minister for Finance, was the Chief Guest. Dr. (Mrs.) Grace Morley, the Asian Head of the International Council of Museums, and Mrs. Rene Marcousse, an expert on museum education from the International Council of Museums, greatly high-lighted the seminar by their presence.

The seminar consisted of two sessions. In the first session which was held in the morning the participants were Dr. Grace Morley, Mrs. Rene Marcousse, Prof. A. K. Nazmul Karim, Chairman of the Deptt. of Sociology, Dacca University, Mr. Mokammel Haque, Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Mr. A. K. M. Zakaria, Secretary of the Cultural Affairs & Sports Division, Lt. Col. Heshamuddin Ahmed, Administrator, Dacca Municipality, and Dr. Enamul Haque, Director of Dacca Museum.

In the afternoon important discussions were held under the chairmanship of Mr. Mokammel Haque, Secretary of the Ministry of Education. Dr. Grace Morley, Mrs. Rene Marcousse, the Director of the Dacca Museum, the Director of the Museum of Science & Technology, the Director of Public Instruction, the Chairman of the Text Book Board, the Principal of the Teachers Training College, the Director of the Education Extension Centre, senior teachers from the Dacca University, and Head-masters from different schools of the city participated in the discussions and made various suggestions for the use of museum services by both teachers and students.

The Dacca Museum later published the proceedings of the seminar.

IX. PUBLICATIONS :

- (a) The Museum has decided to publish the enlarged doctoral thesis of Dr. Enamul Haque, Director, done at the University of Oxford titled *The Iconography of the Hindu Sculptures of Bengal (upto c. 1250 A.D.)*.

- (b) The first issue of Vol. 1 of *Bangladesh Lalit Kalā*, the half-yearly research journal of the Dacca Museum, was published in January, 1975 with illustrated articles by Professor S. K. Saraswati, Dr. Nazimuddin Ahmed, Professor Susan L. Huntington, Professor D. P. Ghosh, Dr. Enamul Haque, Dr. Harunur Rashid, Dr. Mukhlesur Rahman, Dr. A. B. M. Hussain and Mr. Muhammad Nizamuddin. The journal has been well received by the scholars at home and abroad.

X. VISITORS :

The number of visitors to the Museum is taken on the basis of attendance during a calendar year. A total of 2,50,359 persons visited the Dacca Museum during the year 1974. Among the visitors there were 1,54,775 adult males, 27,241 adult females and 68,343 children. The Museum remained open for 290 days during the whole year. The daily average number of visitors worked out at 863.3 persons. The maximum for a day was 2,902 persons on Sunday, the 21st July, 1974.

Admission is free and the Museum remains closed on Thursday.

NOTICE OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON BENGAL ART

General Circular No. 1 (amended)

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 6th to 9th March 1976 (previously scheduled for 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

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