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# गुल्लक Gullak



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## Inauguration of New Reesha Office at Fort, Mumbai



The new Office of the Reesha Group (Reesha Books International and Reesha Coin Services) was inaugurated on the 18th May 2010 at Fort, Mumbai. The day also coincided with the 55th Marriage Anniversary of Mrs. Javerben J. Rajgor and Mr. Javerilal M. Rajgor. The office was inaugurated at the hands of Mrs. and Mr. Rajgor at 3.00 pm.

The inauguration was attended by around 125 friends, collectors, dealers and well wishers of Reesha.

The new office of the Reesha Group is spread in ground plus mezzanine floors with a room of about 350 sq. ft. The ground floor consists of a showroom plus office area, and the mezzanine is made into a meeting place for coin collectors and coin dealers with a sitting capacity of 25 persons.



Consignment deadline for our next  
Auction #45 in August is 5th July.



121 - Akbar, Gold 1/4 Heavy Mohur,  
named Man (mind), obv. Allahu Akbar,  
rev. Jale Jallaluhu. Realized- Rs. 2,60,000



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363 - Guptas, Skandagupta, Gold, Dinar,  
King and Lakshmi type, Very Fine,  
Extremely Rare. Realized- Rs. 1,80,000



743 - Jahangir, Silver, Zodiac Rupee, Taurus sign,  
Bull to right on obv, Agra Mint,  
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93 - 1948: Mahatma Gandhi  
mourning issue, Rs.10/-,  
Block of Four, good condition.  
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## Depiction of Punch-marked coins in Early Indian Art: The case of *Litta Jātaka* at Bhārhut

*By Amol N. Bankar*



Fig. 1: The story of 'Purchase of Jetavana' at Bhārhut (after Cunningham)

Bhārhut is about half-way between Bodhgayā and Sānchi. The remains of the great Stupā of Bhārhut were first discovered by Alexander Cunningham in the end of November 1873. In the beginning of March 1874 the work of excavation was taken up by Cunningham's assistant Mr. J.D. Begler and the discovery of the valuable Prasenjit Pillar and the famous Jetavana scene was made.

Earlier, Cunningham had given the date of Stupā as between 250 and 200 BC, but according some modern researchers it may belong to Śunga period (185-72 BC). The Stupā itself had pretty much disintegrated during the seven centuries of Buddhism's disappearance from India that preceded Cunningham's transportation of its largest surviving fragments to the Indian Museum at Calcutta. What survived was not the Stupā itself, but portions of the stone railings that once enclosed it. Later, Indian archaeological surveyors brought the remaining pieces to the nearby Allahabad Museum. In between a few trophies were spirited away by overseas collectors. The railing and gateways are covered with a rich encrustation of decorative and narrative relief and the Brāmhi inscriptions identifying most of the scenes are seen just above them.

### The story of *Purchase of Jetavana* at Bhārhut and Bodhgayā

The story of the celebrated Jetavana Monastery is preserved in the circular medallion of one of the pillars at Bhārhut and Bodhgayā. When the Buddha accepted Anāthapiṇḍaka's invitation to visit Sāvasthi (Śrāvastī) the latter, seeking a suitable place for the Buddha's residence, discovered this park belonging to Jetakumāra. When he asked to be allowed to buy it, Jeta's reply was: "Not even if you could cover the whole place with money." Anāthapiṇḍaka said that he would buy it at that price, and when Jeta answered that he had had no intention of making a bargain, the matter was taken before the Lords of Justice, who decided that if the price mentioned were paid, Anāthapiṇḍaka had the right of purchase. Anāthapiṇḍaka had money brought down in carts and covered Jetavana with pieces laid side by side. The money brought in the first journey was found insufficient to cover one small spot near the gateway. So Anāthapiṇḍaka sent his servants back for more. It is said that Anāthapiṇḍaka paid eighteen crores for the purchase of the site. But Jeta, inspired by Anāthapiṇḍaka's earnestness, asked to be allowed to give this



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spot. Anāthapiṇḍaka agreed, Jeta spent all the money in the construction of the gateway gifted by him. Jeta gave, besides, many valuable trees for timber. Anāthapiṇḍaka himself spent fifty-four crores in connection with the purchase of the park and the buildings erected in it.

The vihāra is almost always referred to as '*Jetavane Anāthapiṇḍakassa ārāma*' (in Jeta Grove, Anāthapiṇḍaka's Monastery). Jetavana was the place where Buddha gave many teachings and discourses, more than in any other place. Mainly, this is because Buddha spent 19 rainy-seasons (*vassā*) at Jetavana, more than in any other monastery. Some of the chief buildings attached to the Jetavana are mentioned in the early Buddhist records by special names, viz., Mahāgandhakuti, Kaverimandalamālā, Kosambakuti and Candanamālā. Out of these, Gandha-kuti and Kosambakuti are inscribed in above



Fig. 2: The story of Purchase of Jetavana at Bodhgayā (after Cunningham)

scene. The remains of Jetavana and Sāvatti were locally known as Sāhet-Māhet. Cunningham used the ancient accounts of Chinese pilgrim-monks (6th century AD) to determine that Sāhet-Māhet actually referred to Jetavana and Sāvatti, it was corroborated by one old inscription mentioning 'Kosamba-kuti,' which was discovered by Cunningham in 1864 within the precincts of the Jetavana Monastery.

According to Huntington (2000:55-56), the date of the Jetavanārāma story is undoubtedly later than the actual gift of the land. However, by the time of the Bhārhut Stupā (c 80 BC) the story was important enough in Buddhist literature to warrant its depiction in sculpture. According to archaeological excavations there is little doubt that the Jetavanārāma existed, and presumably, many events related to early layers of Buddhist Sutras occurred at this site. The Jetavanārāma site has been excavated by Archaeological Survey of India to the late Gupta levels (5<sup>th</sup> century AD) unfortunately, at this time no effort has been made to reach the earlier levels.

Nearly the same scene is depicted on a pillar of the railing of the Mahābodhi temple at Bodhgayā (Cunningham 1892:12,13, Plate VIII) but in simple style (Fig. 2). In this representation also the banker, Anāthapiṇḍaka and his servants are shown engaged covering the surface of the Jetavana with square pieces of coins. Two persons are, covering the garden area as at Bhārhut, and another servant is standing behind them with a pot full of coins on his left shoulder. Here the coins are shown square as well as rectangular also the sculpture is worn with time and we could comment whether any symbols were available on these square pieces. At the Great Stupa of Sānchi, on second panel of East or left pillar of Northern Gateway, we again find the representation of Jetavana Monastery showing the three favorite residences of the Buddha (viz. Gandhakuti, Kosambakuti and Karorakuti) with the throne of the Buddha in the front of each. As regards identification of this and of the whole facade of the pillar, the square pieces shown edge to edge in the foreground of the relief are of great significance. They are undoubtedly to be recognized as square punch-marked Karshapanas. In fact, they were a sign intended to indicate the Jetavana Monastery of which the purchase-story was so well known.

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In Bhārhut, there is another sculptured scene of uncertain identification which bears the following epigraph: '*Brahmadevo manavako*'. Amongst four male figures carrying offerings obviously to the Bodhi-tree shown in the last scene of the panel there is one shown holding in his hands a shallow basket full of square pieces. The purport of the story is not clear but the pieces in the basket appear to be coins of the punch-marked variety.

Also there are several evidences of early punch-marked coins as depicted in early Indian sculptures from different places and some examples given by Agrawala (1965:170-76) can be listed as follows:

- 1) On a beautiful terracotta plaque from Kauśāmbi (now in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, B.H.U.), we find prince Udayana and his queen Vāsavadatta and Viduśaka friend riding on the back of an elephant Viduśaka is throwing coins in order to divert the attention of the pursuing soldiers who are actually shown engaged in picking them. They are obviously of the punch-marked variety. Some of them are round and some are square and irregular; traces of typical marks can be seen on them. In the Bharat Kala Bhavan itself, there are two more 'copies', though much fragmentary, prepared from the same mould depicting this Story. Similar better copy of the plaque produced from perhaps the same matrix is in the Allahabad Municipal Museum. All of these come from Kauśāmbi and show the popularity of Udayana-Vāsavadatta story in the Śunga period. They illustrate also that how the current coins of the period looked like. The scene of Udayana-Vāsavadatta flight almost in the same period is depicted in a stone-relief in the Khandagiri-Udayagiri caves in Orissa. The legend is here divided in several scenes. In the first part of the story is shown similarly, as on the terracotta plaque, the motif of Vasantaka seated -on the back of the elephant showering coins from a purse to divert the pursuing soldiers from their main job. The same scene occurs in the upper storey of the Ganesh-gumpha in a frieze with several other famous legends of Sanskrit literature.
- 2) Amongst valuable terracotta and pottery findings brought to light through the exploration carried by Ramachandran (1951:234-37) at Tamluk (Dist Midnapur, Bengal), a beautiful terracotta plaque shows a *Purnaghata* overflowing with punch-marked coins. It is

undoubtedly a Śunga specimen of red colour measuring 3" x 2.4". On the body of the pot are visible six vertical rows of round and square coins overflowing from the mouth of the vase. They are finely executed in relief as if with utmost care and details to portray contemporary coins with full realistic exactitude. And, thus the artist has successfully attempted at showing even the tiny punches on them. From the enlarged photograph reproduced by Ramachandran in his article on Tamluk, we are even able to recognize with the help of a magnifying glass some of the known punch-marked symbols, viz., sun, *chaitya*, and a sign which looks like 'te' of Brāhmi script. On the mouth of the vase there are visible traces of two feet suggesting a surmounted figure of a god or goddess. Together with the pot a terracotta figurine of the same style was also found whose head and portion below the knees are missing. Presumably it originally surmounted the auspicious vase oozing coins. The figure is to be taken as that of goddess Śri-Lakṣmi who was the ancient goddess of plenty and wealth.

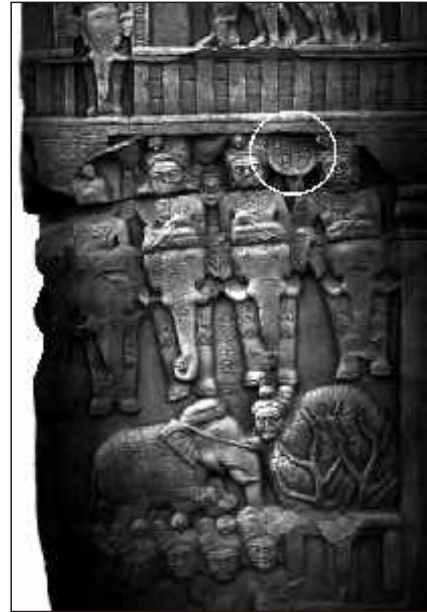


Fig. 3: Sculptured scene of uncertain identification from Bhārhut (after Cunningham)

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- 3) In the famous *Cakravartin* panel from Jaggayyāpeta, we find represented sovereign-ruler Mandhāta, accompanied by his Seven Jewels, with upraised right hand receiving the shower of coins from heaven, whose story is met with in the *Divyāvadāna*. The squares (with visible tiny signs) shown in the background of the relief near the head level of the Monarch, are undoubtedly the representations of punch-marked coins current in the contemporary period of the 1st-2nd centuries BC.
- 4) From very early times, Yakṣas were considered as presiding genii of wealth and their lord Vaiśravaṇa-Kubera became the god of wealth. In iconography, Yakṣa statues especially those of Kubera are often shown holding a purse (*nidhi*) in their hand. Coomaraswamy in connection with the well-known Kalpavrkṣa Capital of a Dhvajastambha from Besnagar, pointed out it to be a Capital of the Column of Kubera. It is a banyan tree and as he described, between the hanging aerial roots will be seen a pot, and

two bags overflowing with money; on the other side of the tree in a corresponding position are found a lotus flower and a conch each similarly exuding coins. These last are clearly the *nidhis* of Kubera. Usually the date ascribed to this capital is the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C, and there can be no doubt that the square pieces issuing forth from the *Padma* and *Sankha nidhis* of Kubera are contemporary punch-marked coins

- 5) A similar representation of a conch exuding coins comes from a railing cross-bar of Kankāli Tilā Jaina Stupa at Mathura belonging to about the 2nd century BC. But curiously enough in this case the *Sankha* is winged, and it is a rare example in itself. As a *nidhi* attribute conch-shell is found in the right hand of the Pālwāl Yakṣa from Gudgaon in the State Museum, Lucknow. But it is a simple conch, without wings and with no coins shown issuing from it.

*To be continued ...*

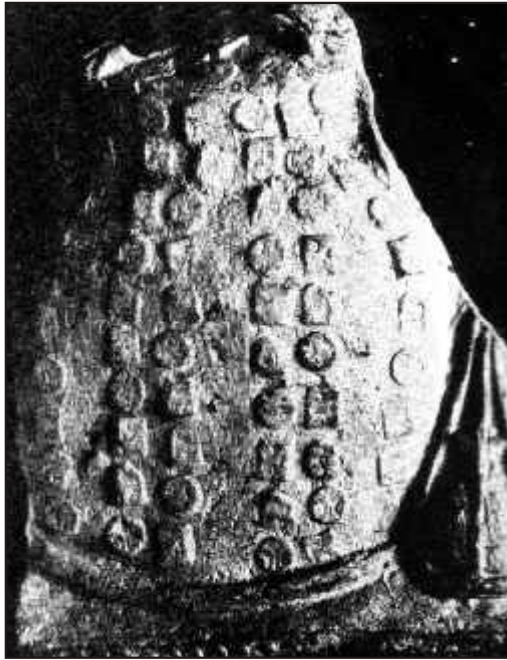


Fig. 4: Depictions of Punch-marked coins from Tamluk and Kankali Tila (after P.K. Agrawala)

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## Down the Memory Lane ...

## Memoirs of Jagdish Agarwal - Part 4

**First Coin Exhibition of India**

With the help of local collectors/dealers and scholars, the Calcutta Coin Society was formed. It had no subscription for members as the aim of the Society was to popularize the hobby of coin collecting.

In 1974, the Asiatic Society was going to host the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the Numismatic Society of India. Prof. B. N. Mukherjee, Secretary of the Asiatic Society (who regularly visited our monthly meeting) invited our Society to join them in hosting the NSI Conference. There we decided to hold first-ever coin exhibition of the country.

For the conference, I made 14 plastic coin sheets (of 3x3 feet) with coins pocket. Each sheet had different pockets as per the need of exhibitors. Each sheet was given to exhibitors to carry home. They filled the pockets with coins, wrote detail and history and each pocket was sealed. They brought the sheet on exhibition day at the venue.

These were hanged in the exhibition hall like door curtain with unbreakable glasses on both the sides. By this a visitor can view the coins from both sides easily without any difficulty. Details of each frame and each coin, including what was written on obverse and reverse was printed in the souvenir of the exhibition.

The NSI conference was attended by 150 outstation delegates, 15 foreign delegates along with 100 members of Asiatic Society and Calcutta Coin Society. All the Scholars from Bengal; Vice-Chancellors of Calcutta University, Jadavpur University and Kalyani University; outstanding scholars like Prof. K. D. Bajpai, Prof. G. H. Khare and many others attended the conference and the exhibition. They were surprised to see the exhibition as for them it was first experience of their life. During the inauguration of the Conference, the Hon. Governor of West Bengal, A. L. Dias gave us only 5 minutes to visit the exhibition. When he entered in the hall, he called his ADC and canceled all other appointments and spent more than one hour with us.



*Shri Bani Bhushan Chakraborty examining coins in 1974 at Calcutta Exhibition*

A copy of the souvenir of the exhibition was sent to Nicholas Rhodes (the famous authority on Nepal, Tibet and coins of Eastern India) to London. He was also surprised and wrote back, *it is amazing, I regret in missing it, some exhibited coins are new to my knowledge. Though I missed the show, but at least I know what was shown through your souvenir.*

**First Coin Auction of India**

On 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1967, the first coin auction of India was conducted by me at Kolkata. Nearly 56 coins were auctioned and approximately Rs. 4,000 were realized. It was attended by 35 collectors. The 2<sup>nd</sup> auction was conducted by me in Nov. 1970.

After a gap of 20 years, Farokh Todywalla conducted his first auction at Nagpur on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1990. In all, 59 coins were auctioned, out of them 5 items were unsold and Rs. 38,725/- were realized.

Farokh Todywalla conducted his 2<sup>nd</sup> auction again at Nagpur on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1990. Unfortunately, out of 169 lots, 112 lots were unsold (the reason was simple: due to Kar-Sewa threatening by Supporters of Ram Janmbhumi, the whole city was under tension and people were more interested in politics than coins). For the first time in India, gold coin was auctioned by Todywalla and the total auction realization was Rs. 1,26,000.

Later Farokh opened his Auction house and is conducting auctions all over India with as many as 44 auctions till now. Recently, Girish J. Veera has also started his auction house with his first auction organized at Pune in 2009. Girish is professionally moving very fast and conducted in all, 13 auctions in little over a year.

Now a days, 8 to 10 auctions are being held in a year. Though I am not against auctions, but I feel too much exposure is bad for trade.

- Jagdish Agarwal (jagarwalin@yahoo.co.in)

*To be continued ...*

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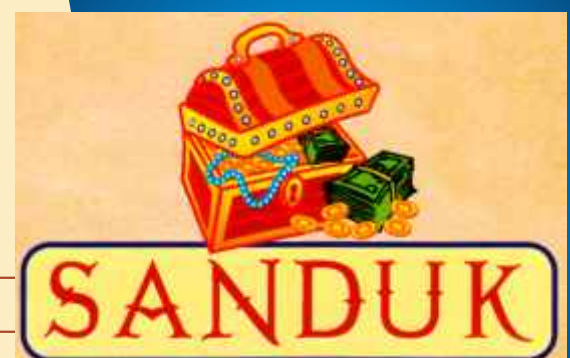
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## New Symbol for Indian Rupee to appear shortly

By Mahendra Kumar Singh



The Indian Rupee is all set to join the elite club of major currencies like the dollar, euro, pound sterling and yen that have a unique identification symbol, with the Union Cabinet set to take a call on the matter on 24th June. The proposal is said to have been prompted by the growing influence of the Indian economy in the global arena.

The Finance Ministry has short-listed five designs for the Rupee, reflecting the country's ethos and culture, after inviting designs from the public to represent the currency in a simple form. The short-listed designs are said to be simple, easy to write and designed to appeal to the Indian and global community. The designers were asked to present their designs to a seven-member jury comprising officials from the government and the RBI, and representatives from the National Institute of Design, Lalit Kala Akademi, JJ Institute of Applied Arts and the Indira Gandhi National Center. According to sources, the Cabinet is expected to give its nod to a symbol reflecting the Devanagari (Hindi) alphabet of "R" with two lines.

## M.A. in Indian Coins at University of Mumbai

University of Mumbai Dinesh Mody Institute for Numismatics and Archaeology's M.A. student has been awarded the prestigious **British Scholarship of the Royal Numismatic Society** to work on Indian coins in England. **Mr. Mahesh Kalra**, the M.A. (Part II) student of the Institute has been awarded the coveted Nicholas Lowick Grant to work on the topic, "**Mughal Coins of Hyderabad Mint**".

The Dinesh Mody Institute, a department of the University of Mumbai, offers the country's first Master's Degree in Numismatics (study of coins). The Institute has more than 15 Scholarships from USA and Mumbai to encourage the fast expanding field of coins and currency.

Coins are seriously considered as a new medium of safe, secure and profitable investment. A large number of past students secured attractive placements in India in various organizations including auction houses, publishing companies, shops, etc.

Amongst the professional courses, fees for this course are the lowest. Admission to the course has already begun for graduates of all disciplines. Admissions are open till 31<sup>st</sup> July 2010.



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### Calendar of Events 2010

Month	Date	Place	Event	Venue
June	5	Mumbai	Museum Coin Show	Dinesh Mody Numismatic Museum, University Kalina Campus, Santacruz (E), Mumbai 400098
July	3	Mumbai	Museum Coin Show	Dinesh Mody Numismatic Museum (drajgor@hotmail.com)
July	9-11	Nagercoil	Kumaripex 2010	Kanyakumari District Philatelic & Numismatic Association, Valanar Thirumana Mandapam, Assisi Campus, Nagercoil
August	20-22	Ahmedabad	Ahmedabad Coins & Currency Fair	Shatrughan Jain, at Hotel Comfort Inn President, C G Road.
September	23-26	Mumbai	8th Exhibition of Coins, Notes & Stamps	Mumbai Coin Society at World Trade Centre, Cuffe Parade, Mumbai (coingallery@hotmail.com)
October	1-3	Bangalore	Nanyadarshini 2010	Karnataka Numismatic Society, Shikshak Sadan, K.G. Road, Opp. Cauvery Bhavan, (Mahesh Jambulingam 094480 80502)
October	1-3	Jabalpur	Dharohar 2010	Jabalpur Coin & Philately Society on "Mahatma Gandhi" at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Samudayak Bhawan, Gujarati Mandal, Civic Center
October	19-21	Bhubaneswar	94th Annual Conference of NSI	Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology
November	11-12	Chandigarh	International Seminar	Coinage of the Imperial Guptas and their Contemporaries: New Perspectives, Dept. of Ancient Indian History Culture and Archaeology, Punjab University (ashi_593@yahoo.co.in)
December	3-5	Pune	CoinEx 2010 Pune	International Collectors' Society of Rare Items
December	16-19	Mumbai	2nd Museum Coin Fair	2nd All-India Numismatic Conference and Museum Coin Fair, Dinesh Mody Numismatic Museum (drajgor@hotmail.com)
December	24-26	Kolkata	14th Coin Exhibition & Conference	Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the Numismatic Society of Calcutta, Haldiram's Banquet, Ballygunj, Kolkata

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