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Note on Some of the Symbols on the Coins of Kunanda.—By
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The coins of this king are so well known and have been so well delineated and so fully described, that it may excite surprise that any new light should be sought to be thrown on the symbols they bear, without recourse to any essentially nearer or different material than those which have already undergone the scrutiny of some of our ablest orientalisists; and I feel that a sort of apology may well be expected for my presumption in claiming to see deeper into the subject than others have done, who are far abler than myself in this particular branch of enquiry, and that my justification can alone be found, by establishing with a fair amount of probability the substantial correctness of the views which have suggested themselves to me, after the perusal of the papers of some of my eminent predecessors in this enquiry. For my present purpose it will, I think, suffice to quote from the writings of Prof. H. H. Wilson in his 'Ariana Antiqua,' p. 415, Pl. XV, f. 23; a paper by E. Thomas, Esq., in J. R. A. S. Vol. I, New Series, p. 447; a paper by my learned and esteemed friend Bábu Rájendralála Mitra in J. A. S. B. 1875, Part I, p. 82, and Prinsep's Pl. XXXII, J. A. S. B. 1838.

The type of both the silver and copper coins of Kunanda is very constant, so far as the general design goes, though the copper coins vary considerably in size, weight, and execution, while the dies of the more

carefully executed silver coins present minor variations, which do not, however, impair the marked uniformity of type pervading them all.

Professor Wilson thus describes the silver coin figured by him in 'Ariana Antiqua,' Pl. XV, f. 23. "Round. Stag, to the right with female figure in front; above the back of the animal a symbol, Mon. No. 164*d*, and between its horns another (?) No. 164*b* * * * * * *Rev.* A chaitya surmounted by an umbrella, and Mon. No. 156; on its right a square Mon. No. 165 surmounted by a triple tree; on its left two symbols, No. 166 and the sign familiar to the Hindus by the name of Swastika. See No. 158'' l. c. p. 415.

On the preceding page, Professor Wilson remarks: "The principal object is a female figure, in front of a stag, the meaning of which does not derive much light from the passage quoted by Mr. Csoma from the *Dul-va* that 'a man of the religious order may have on his seal or stamp a circle with two deer on the opposite sides, and below, the name of the founder of the *Vihara* or monastery.'" Wilson's coin I will designate as *a*.

Mr. E. Thomas (l. c.) thus describes his coin, which may be called *b*.

"The central figure represents the conventional form of the sacred deer of the Buddhist. (1) The horns are fancifully curved, and the tail is imitated from that of the Himalayan *yak*; an appendage, which, in its material use and pictorial embodiment, was so early accepted as a distinctive type of royalty. In attendance on this symbolic animal is a lightly draped female (2) who holds aloft a lotus (3). The monogram \square (4) complete the emblems on the field, but the lotus is repeated at the commencement of the legend."

The emblems on the reverse are thus described; (p. 476) "The central device consists of a *stupa* (5) surmounted by a small *chhatra* (6), above which appears a favourite Buddhist symbol (7). At the foot is a serpent (8). In the field are the Bodhi tree (9), the Swastika cross (10), and an emblem peculiar to the Buddhists (11)."

The coin itself is figured on p. 457. In a note on p. 475, Mr. Thomas adds, "On some coins* the lotus is inserted in the field below the body of the stag. On other specimens the letter $\Delta = V$ (*Vihāra*?) occupies the vacant space." The third coin, *c*, figured by Bábu Rájendralála Mitra (J. A. S. B. 1875, Part I, p. 89) does not materially differ as regards the emblems engraved on it, from specimen *b*, and need not therefore be more particularly described here. The fourth specimen in silver, *d*, is a coin in my own possession, which differs in the animal on the obverse, standing in full side profile, so as to display one horn only; in the female holding some obscure object, which it is hardly pos-

* J. A. S. B. Pl. XXXII. f. 4.—W. T.

sible to regard as a lotus, but which may be intended for a *chowri* or fly-whisk, and in the presence beneath the animal's belly of a small chaitya, made of three segments of circles.

The three symbols which it is proposed to consider, are—1st : The animal forming the central figure on the obverse of these coins. 2nd, the symbol or emblem over the animal's head ; and 3rd, the object or symbol on the reverse, standing to the left of the chaitya, numbered 11 by Thomas, but the nature of which he professes his inability to explain.

As regards the animal which writers have agreed to term a 'deer,' the question which first arises is, whether the same animal is in every case intended, or if two animals have not been confounded under one designation ? The rude execution and style of many of these coins, particularly the upper ones, has, I think, contributed to a laxity of interpretation, resulting on a fundamental misconception of the animal which generally appears on the coins, as from the careful consideration of the four above-mentioned silver coins, it may be gravely doubted if a 'deer' is the animal intended to be represented on any of them ! In coarsely executed coins of small size, like these of Kunanda, no absolute decision can perhaps be arrived at on the evidence of a single specimen, but in coins of fairly good execution, as for example, specimen *b*, on which Mr. Thomas recognises (correctly in my opinion) the tail of the animal, as the tail of the Himalayan yak (*Poephagus grunniens*) something beyond mere assertion is called for, before we can admit the theory that the artist intended to represent a 'deer,' with the tail super-added of an animal belonging to an entirely different section of ruminants.

The well known canon of Horace should serve to warn us against adopting such a supposition, unless there is strong evidence to warrant our so doing.

“Pictoribus atque poetis

Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas.

Scimus, et hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim :

Sed non ut placidis coëant immitia, non ut

Serpentes avibus gementur, tigribus agni.” Ad Pisones.

“Poets and painters (sure you know the plea)

Have always been allowed their fancy free.’

I own it ; 'tis a fair excuse to plead ;

By turns we claim it, and by turns concede ;

But 'twill not screen the unnatural and absurd,

Unions of lamb with tiger, snake with bird.” Conington's translation.

The horns or antlers of deer are branched and deciduous, and capable of being periodically shed and renewed; the horns of other ruminants are unbranched, persistent and supported by bony cores, as in the oxen and antelopes, and these appendages are so characteristic of the animal, that to represent an ox with the curved and knotted horns on its head or an Ibex or the antlers of a *bara-singha* or stag, would be as monstrous as the figure presented by 'Bottom,' disguised with an ass's head, or the unnatural productions of heraldic imagery. Now on a coin, it were more easy to represent with effect, a branched horn or antler, such as characterise a 'deer,' than a simple unbranched one, such as is invariably borne by a bovine ruminant; but on none of the above four coins, all perhaps above the average of execution, nor indeed on the majority of the coins in question, in either silver or copper, is there any indication of an attempt to represent the animal with a branched horn, or the antler of a deer, and hence I think we may fairly hesitate to believe that a 'deer' was the animal intended.

In the best executed specimens the tail is 'bushy' and drawn with sufficient character, to fully warrant Mr. Thomas in describing it, as the tail of a yak. What induced Mr. Thomas to consider this yak's tail, as grafted on to the body of a 'deer' it is needless to enquire, but the question for us to consider is, if the animal is not rather a *yak* than a *deer*?

Professor Wilson in his description of the coin figured in *Ariana Antiqua* gives a clue to the correct determination of this point, and differs from Mr. Thomas in describing a symbol (No. 164*b* a. a. Pl. XXII) as occurring over the head of the animal. This 'symbol' (as Professor Wilson correctly regards it) Mr. Thomas evidently regarded as constituting part of the horns, which he consequently described as "fancifully curved," and in this he is followed (though inferentially only and without special comment or allusion) by Bábu Rájendralála Mitra; but the distinctness of the figure of Wilson's coin *a* fully supports the view that the object or symbol in question has no connection with the horns of the animal, however much that may seem to be the case in less carefully executed or less well preserved coins.

In the coin *d* in my own possession the complete isolation of the symbol in question from the horns of the animal is as clearly marked as in Wilson's specimen, and is rendered more striking and obvious by the somewhat different 'pose' of the animal, which offering a side profile, displays but a single horn, whereas Wilson's figure exhibits both.

With equal clearness is the distinct separation between the symbol and the horns of the animal represented on Prinsep's Plate XXXII, J. A. S. B. 1838, figs. 4 and 5, where the artist's intention to depict two cobras facing each other can hardly be questioned. These coins are of

silver, but on the same Plate a copper coin fig. 8 supports the same conclusion. It may also be added that on two copper coins on the Plate figs. 9 and 10 the symbol appears to be wholly absent.

In every coin but one, which has come under my notice, in either silver or copper, the horns are unbranched, or of the *bovine*, as contrasted with the *cervine* type, and in the exceptionally fine specimen *a*, would appear as though slightly twisted, precisely as the horns of the *yak* actually are. Generally, however, the horns are represented as simply curved, but for this, there is a sufficient reason, in the extreme difficulty of representing in metal, such horns in any other way; there was therefore every inducement to the artist to represent a branched horn of a 'deer' as most effectively and in the most artistic manner indicating that animal, had such been his design. On the evidence then of coins *a* and *d* it may be assumed as established, that the horns of the animal represented on the majority of these coins, are not "fancifully curved" (through their accidentally coalescing with the symbol above them) but possess the simple curvature of a yak's horn, and as the peculiar bushy tail of that animal is represented as well, with no mean pictorial fidelity, the conclusion is irresistible that the Himalayn yak, and no species of 'deer,' is the animal usually intended.

One coin has, however, fallen under my notice, the first upper coin of this series in the British Museum collection, which undoubtedly represents an animal with branched horns, and I see therefore no escape from the conclusion that on this particular coin a *deer* and not a *yak* is really intended. Perhaps other collections may contain similar coins, but it is the only one I have myself hitherto seen. On this coin also (whether as some might suppose fortuitously, or as I am inclined to believe, by intention) the tail of the animal is long and lank, and not bushy like a yak's; and the very fact of the tail being represented rather long, though a deer's tail is short, appears to me not improbably to have been an intentional deviation from nature on the artist's part, the more forcibly to proclaim by the palpable contrast between a lank tail and the ordinary bushy one, the substitution of a stag in place of the more generally accepted yak. This it may, perhaps, be urged is too refined a speculation, as on the coarser and less carefully executed copper coins of the usual type, the bushy character of the tail is not invariably maintained; but in the case of this coin (though it be of copper) where the artist has introduced the crucial detail, as I may call it, of a branched horn, the style of tail represented, more probably results from design, and is correlated to the alteration in other particulars, than from imperfect or careless execution.

It now remains only to add a few words on the objects or symbols

depicted over the yak's head. In Wilson's coin *a* it is clear that whatever they are, they are separated from, and have no relation to, the horns of the animal, and the same remark applies to the coin *d* in my own possession. They are in fact two rather stumpy or conventional figures of snakes, presumably the Indian Cobra (*Naga tripudians*), and this is so apparent as to cause surprise that Professor Wilson should have contented himself with including them in his Plate of symbols (No. 164*b*) without hazarding any opinion as to their true significance. On the copper coins of rude execution, these objects are often degraded into two straight-backed *sigma*-shaped objects quite unconnected with the horns, whilst in such coins as those figured by Mr. Thomas (*b*) and by Bábu Rájendralála Mitra (*c*) of superior execution, the lengthened and more serpentine form given them, causes the tail cut to approximate sufficiently close to the termination of the horns of the animal, to give rise to the mistaken idea that they are really prolongations of them.

The appropriateness of a pair of cobras among a collection of Buddhist symbols is unquestionable, and on this the remarks of Mr. Thomas which relate to the single snake below the chaitya on the reverse of these coins may here be quoted. “(8) The craft of serpent-charming in the East, probably from the very beginning, contributed a powerful adjunct towards securing the attention and exciting the astonishment of the vulgar, whether used as an accessory to the unpretentious contents of the juggler's wallet, or the more advanced mechanical appliances* of professors of magic—who among so many ancient nations progressively advanced the functions of their order from ocular deceptions to the delusion of men's minds and the framing of religions of which they constituted themselves the priests. India, which so early achieved a civilization purely its own, would appear, in the multitude of the living specimens of the reptile its soil encouraged, to have simultaneously affected the mass of its population with the instinctive dread and terror of the scriptural enemy of mankind—a fear which, in the savage stage, led to a sacrificial worship similar to that accorded to less perceptible evil spirits. Hence the dominance of the belief in Nagas, which came to be a household and state tradition, and which especially retained its preeminence in the more local Buddhist faith” (l. c. p. 484).

In representing two snakes facing one another, we have an indication, (apart from their tripudiant attitude) that the cobra was intended,

* The learned writer may not improbably when penning these words have had the line of Juvenal in his mind.

“Et movisse caput visa est argentea serpens.” Satire VI, line 338.

“The silver snake

Abhorrent of the deed was seen to quake.” Gifford's translation.

as these reptiles are popularly supposed, and with some justice I believe, to associate in pairs, so much so that it is commonly believed that if one is killed it will not be long before its companion will be found near the same place. Whether this is a trait with poisonous snakes only, I do not know, but in corroboration thereof in their case I can relate an instance within my own personal knowledge. Many years ago I had a terrier dog bitten in a dry ditch in Calcutta, by a Chandra borá, (*Daboia Russelli*, Shaw). The dog died in a very short time, and I then and there killed its assailant, a powerful animal of some five feet in length. The very next day, as I was walking in slippers over the same spot, I narrowly escaped putting my foot down on, and being bitten by a very similar snake, which I naturally concluded to be the partner of the one killed the day previously. The appearance, however, of two hooded snakes or Cobras on coins is too common to call for further comment, but it may be asked how comes this serpent symbol to be repeated on the reverse. To this the answer is clear. The solitary serpent, depicted as a single undulating line below the chaitya represents not the cobra, but another type of reptile altogether, the Asiatic Python. It is of course needless to remind the reader that two distinct ideas are embodied in the symbol of the serpent (considered apart from the local Indian Naga) viz., that, with which we are most familiar, of the serpent as the embodiment of evil, the Vedic 'Ahis' and 'Vritra,' the dreaded throttling snake of primeval mythology; and the serpent in its beneficent aspect and the symbol of life-giving and healing power. It is of course in this latter aspect that the serpent appears beneath the 'chaitya,' and on one copper coin in my possession, the serpent is depicted, not extended at length below the chaitya, but as entering into it from below, so that regarding the 'chaitya' as a leaf, the serpent is indicated as occupying the position of its stalk, that is, as partly parallel with its base, but curved up and united to it, in the middle. The idea in this instance is (I would suggest) that the sacred 'chaitya' has been selected as its abode by the sacred and symbolic animal, as the sacred serpents of other lands were popularly held to do, in some shrine or temple of Pallas, Phoibos or Æsculapius. This copper coin exhibiting the union of the snake and 'chaitya' is in rather poor condition and weighs 34 grains, but does not display any other deviation from the ordinary type of these coins.

The third symbol on these coins to be now noticed is that numbered 11 by Mr. Thomas and regarding which he thus expresses himself (l. c. page 487).

"(11) I am unable to conjecture the intent or import of the singular emblem which appears below the Swastika. An earlier form of the

device occurs on the introductory weight currency * * * but this outline suggests no more intelligible solution of its real import than the more advanced linear configuration. The design may possibly have emanated from some fortuitous combination of mystic signs of local origin, so many of which passed imperceptibly into the symbolization of Buddhism. General Cunningham states that this device, in its modified form as seen on Kunanda's coins, is found on the necklace of Buddhist symbols on one of the Sanchi gateways."

I would here enter, *en passant*, a protest against the idea of any "fortuitous combination" being responsible for the origin of religious symbols of any sort; indeed the terms 'mystic' and 'fortuitous' appear to be mutually incompatible. The reason why hair grows on some parts of our body and not on others, may be unknown to us, but it is certainly not fortuitous. The removal of the hair from a part of the body, in the tonsure of the priest, is also not fortuitous, but mystical in the highest degree; and we should certainly err in supposing the 'tonsure' a fortuitous and meaningless custom, because its origin being thoroughly pagan, and rooted in an impure soil (as we who have lost all sympathy with and almost the power of appreciating justly the old nature worship, would term it) is probably unknown and its import unsuspected by the majority of those individuals in modern Christendom who submit to the rite, and thereby masquerade in the ceremonies of a religion, their very souls would recoil from. The fact that the meaning of a rite or symbol is unknown or but little dwelt on may be used as an argument for suspecting that its origin, like that of many a noble house, is of such a character as to be dishonestly kept in the back ground, but not that it is in any way fortuitous, and still less that it is at once fortuitous and mystical likewise.

Whether the archaic symbol referred to by Mr. Thomas as occurring on the weight currency was of identical import with the symbol on the coins of Kunanda need not here be discussed, as the authority of Mr. Thomas is, I consider, sufficient to settle the question affirmatively; but as regards the symbol on the coins, a very simple and appropriate explanation presents itself to any one familiar with Buddhist manners at the present day in a Buddhist country, like Burma for instance. Viewed then by the light of modern Buddhist usage, the symbol in question resolves itself into an altar or receptacle wherein food is exposed for the benefit of animals, in the neighbourhood of a monastery or pagoda. In Burma, food may often be seen thus exposed, often lavishly, for the use of any passing animal, generally on the ground or on some low and easily accessible spot, but sometimes on a raised platform or altar constructed for the purpose. For the use of birds, a pious Buddhist would

naturally provide a raised support, much of the character of the symbol in question on the coins, so that the birds, when feeding, might be safe from the attack of any beast of prey in ambush near them, and such an altar for the reception of food, is in strict accord with the other symbols with which it is associated. To those who have not seen the symbol, it may be roughly described as resembling a flower-pot elevated on a pole, but whether the intention is to represent a partially hollow receptacle or not, is neither very clear nor very material.

The archaic form of the symbol supports, or, at all events, does not militate against the explanation now offered. It consists of an upright T supporting a cup-shaped vessel, not improbably representing the begging bowl of a Buddhist monk.

On one side of this vessel are two appendages forming a < the precise character of which is certainly far from clear. It is just possible, if the object is intended for a begging bowl, that the appendage in question may represent conventionally the carp or ends of a band, used to sustain it, whilst collections are being made: but this suggestion I make tentatively and with much hesitation.

These remarks I offer for what they are worth, leaving it to those with more extensive knowledge of the subject than myself, or whose acquaintance with these coins is larger than my own, to decide what weight fairly attaches to them.

Bedford, May 11th, 1886.

The Miná tribe of Jáppur, in Meywar.—By KAVI RÁJ SHYÁMAL DÁSS, M. R. A. S., F. R. Historical Society. Translated by BABU RAM PRASAD.

The Minás are said to be a mixed race: descended from unions between high caste fathers and low caste mothers, and are divided into three hundred and forty clans.

Of these only seventeen are of importance, the remainder being represented only by a few families. They are found all over Rájputáná, but principally in Meywar, Jeypore, Bundi, and Kotá.

The seventeen clans are as follows:

- (1.) Tází ताजी derived from a Rájput father.
- (2.) Pawrí पवड़ी from a Bráhmaṇ father and Miná mother.
- (3.) Mor Jálá मोरजाला.
- (4.) Chítá चीता.
- (5.) Húnháj हणहाज Rájput father and Miná mother.
- (6.) Baraḍ बरड derived from a Mahájan.



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