

ORIENTAL NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

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October - December 1979

It was, unfortunately, not possible to produce a newsletter during October. So it is hoped that members will find this double length October - December newsletter appropriate compensation.

ONS and other meetings

A number of meetings took place during October at which the ONS was well represented. The ONS meeting at St. James' Hall in London on 20th. October was well attended and over 20 members were present. It was a pleasure to meet Dr. van der Wiel and Dr. Nico Arkesteyn from the Netherlands, also Dr. el-Hadidi from Cairo. The auction at this meeting was well supported and Society funds benefitted by over £50. Thanks are due to Spink and Son. Ltd. for donating a number of coins to the auction and to Mrs. Gwyneth Watson for providing a welcome cup of tea and refreshments.

A few days earlier the British Numismatic Trade Association held its first International Fair, "Coinex '79", at the Europa Hotel in London on October 12th - 13th. The 82 stands bore a wide ranging display of coinage, including some Oriental material, presented by many dealers. About two thirds came from London and the provinces and the other third were mainly from Europe and especially the United States. Among the many enthusiasts who thronged the meeting were several ONS members. These included Messrs. Limbada, Webdale, Broome, Sanghvi, DuQuesne-Bird, Shaw, Goron, Shah and Wiggins; Mrs. Watson; Dr. Robinson and the editor who were all from England; also Messrs. Scott Semans and Steve Album from the United States. It has been suggested that the BNTA. International Fair may become an annual event.

On Tuesday 16th October the talk at the Royal Numismatic Society meeting was given by another ONS member, Dr. David MacDowall. He spoke on the Kushans and among his audience it was a pleasure to meet a Kushan enthusiast from the United States, Dr. Craig Burns.

Meanwhile an informal meeting of Oriental Numismatists had taken place on Sept. 13th. in Bern University, during the course of the 9th. International Numismatic Congress. This meeting was chaired by Michael Bates of New York. Also present were Mr. and Mrs. Artuk of Istanbul and Mr. Ekonomi of the same city, M. Hennequin of Paris, Dr. Westphal and Mr. Ilisch from Germany, Mr. H. Schulman from Alicante and further representatives from the United States, Messrs. Kouymjian, Spengler and Totten.

The Numismatic Society of India held its 67th. Annual Conference at Mysore under the auspices of the Department of Ancient History and Archeology, Mysore University, in October.

Members news

Mr. Ken Wiggins has a number of duplicate coins from various Indian Native States for exchange or disposal. Mr. Joe Cribb has a copy of BMC. Arab-Sassanian coins for sale. Mrs. Susan Tyler-Smith is investigating late Sassanian coinage and would like details the mint and year of any Sassanian coins of Yazdegard III known to members, also details of any pellets or other marks in the margin and the position of the star and crescent by the fire altar flames on the reverse. Mr. I.C.G. Campbell has copies of Rev. E. Loventhal's "The coins of Tinnevely" (N.I. reprint) available. Two new societies have been formed in the United States, a 'Japanese Military Currency Society' (dues 5 dollars: details from Pat Hogan) and a 'Russian Numismatic Society' (dues 10 dollars: PO Box F334, Akron, Ohio 44308). Mr. Philip Rudko is interested in obtaining rare and unusual Tibetan coins.



Some recent publications

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- Dasgupta, K. K.*, A Unique silver coin of the Arjunayanas, JNSI 1977, 49
- Eisen, S. T.*, British Sumatra, NI Bull., Jan. 1979, 6 - 10
- Fujita, K.*, The issue amount of the Southern Development Bank, J. Japanese Military Currency Soc., I, no. 2, March 1979, 11 - 17
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- Gupta, P. L.*, The so-called coins of Vijaya and Chakora Satakarnis, JNSI 1977, 84
- Gupta, P. L.*, Muradi Tankah, JNSI 1977, 139
- Jain, B.*, A punch-marked silver coin from Kakarahata in Jabalpur district, JNSI 1977, 153
- Jain, B.*, Indo-sassanian coins from Jabalpur district, JNSI 1977, 169
- Kraneveld, P.*, Singapore Merchant Tokens, NI Bull., March 1979, 79 - 83
- Kumar, K.*, Some terracotta sealings from Sarnath, JNSI 1977, 165
- Kurkman, G.*, Two Armenian Church tokens, SNC., Nov. 1979, 502 - 503
- Lahiri, A. N.*, The so-called Joint Coins of the Indo-Greeks, JNSI 1977, 69
- MacDowall, D. W.*, The monetary systems and currency of Central Asia, 307 - 315 in Prolegomena to the Sources on the History of pre-Islamic Central Asia, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest.

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Far East Journal: this is being published monthly in Japan by Herbert Cook and Michael L. Cummings (dues 15 dollars: air mail) - Far East Journal, CPO 712, Tokyo 100-91, Japan.

Three periodicals from Taiwan are :-

Chinese Coins and Bank Notes Research (monthly), G.P.O Box 58705, Taipei :- Auctions (sometimes with rubbings), advertisements and brief articles in Chinese.

Sin Kwang Monthly (same comments no address in English)

Numismatic World Bi-monthly, G.P.O Box 1932, Taipei :- Articles (photo & rubbing illustrated), advertisements and auctions. Some articles in English by King On Mao; Shi Yin Wong.

Books

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Daniel III, H. A., The catalog and guidebook of south-east Asian coins and currency: vol. 1 France, 2nd. edn. 1978, pp. 144

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Mitchiner, Michael, Oriental Coins and their Values: III. Non-Islamic States and Western Colonies: AD 600 - 1979. Case bound: pp. 640 with over 4,750 coins catalogued and illustrated: £ 38 - 00. Available from B.A. Seaby Ltd, 11 Margaret Street, London W. 1. in February

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A coin of the Sultanate of Sambak (NW. Borneo) ?

by *Raf van Laere*

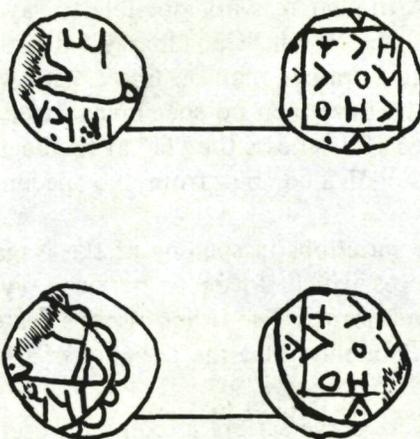
In the Munzkabinett of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (DDR) three un-identified coins are displayed on the same tray as the coins of the Maldive Islands. Two of these are almost identical and the third clearly belongs to the same type. All three coins were crudely struck on a thick copper or bronze flan and are now rather badly corroded. They weigh 6.87, 8.61 (top illustration) and 10.14 (below) grammes. They have diameters between 17 and 20 mm.

The obverse of all three coins is nearly the same. It shows the Latin letters HC + / VOC / CHO in a square shield. Although this legend seems to refer to the famous Dutch VOC trading company, it is not at all clear to what HC and CHO refer. If we take the reverse into consideration we see that at least two of the coins are dated AH 1247 (12th. June AD 1831 - 30th. May 1832). At that time the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie had not existed since its abolition over 30 years previously, in 1799. In fact it is not impossible, though highly unlikely, that one should, alternatively, read HVC; COH, +CO. However, there is also the possibility that an existing coin was copied by a local engraver long after it had ceased to be legal tender. But even in that case it would still be unclear which prototype could have been copied to give this resulting design. The reverse provides as many questions as the obverse. Two coins are clearly dated 1247, the third 124x; and all bear the Arabic numeral "3". The interpretation of the remaining legend is unclear. A coin denomination may be intended.

The inventory of the Munzkabinett states that the coins were brought from SABBAS, which is probably not the harbour town of Sabang on the island Weh to the extreme north-west of Sumatra, but more likely Sambas, a town located in the western part of Borneo on a river of the same name (about 109° E by 1° 30' N). In 1816, after the end of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, the authority of the Dutch was re-established in the western part of Borneo. But part of the population, especially the Chinese of the Sultanate of Sambas, successfully resisted. They never really submitted to the Dutch Government. The continued rebellion and the disinterest of the Dutch from 1825 onwards resulted in a state of unrest. James Brooke (later Sir James) became Rajah of Sarawak in 1841 and helped restore peace in northern and western Borneo.

It may be suggested that the three coins in the Berliner Munzkabinett are likely to have been coined in the Sultanate of Sambas during this period of turmoil; struck either by orders of the Sultan himself, or else by another local authority, in order to supply the need for small change.

I should like to thank Dr. Simon of Berlin for permission to publish these coins and for the help he gave in the preparation of this short note. I would also welcome any suggestions for the reading of the inscriptions.



An unpublished rupee of Narwar (Gwalior State)

by Kenneth Wiggins

AR Rupee: weight 11.02 grams.; diameter 23 mm.

Obv.

شاه عالم نادر شاه
سایه فضل اله حاجی دین
سکه زد بر هفت گنتور



Rev.

مانوس
مسمنت
سنه جلوس
ضرب
نرور



It has previously been noted¹ that there was a period of about 20 years (AD 1793/94 - 1813) during which no silver coins appear to have been issued from the mint of Narwar. At least, none dated within that period have been found, although it was established that copper coins were issued fairly regularly.

A number of rupees have now come to light and it may be assumed that an issue was probably made during this period. The appearance of the rupees is not altogether surprising. These rupees resemble the contemporary copper coins almost exactly, though they are certainly not from the same dies. They are dated as follows: — AH 1216, RY 44; AH 1216, RY 45; AH 1217, RY 43; AH 1217, RY 44; AH 1217, RY 45. Only AH 1216/44 and AH 1217/45 are correct combinations of Hegira date and regnal year: the remainder are incompatible combinations of date and year. Similar discrepancies occur on the copper coins. These are probably the results of ignorance of the system of dating, or the indiscriminate use of dies resulting in muling.

1. Lingen and Wiggins, *Coins of the Sindhias*, London 1978.

Ladakh Coppers again

by N. G. Rhodes

I should like to thank Dr. P. L. Gupta for correcting a major error in my short note on Ladakh copper coins, but some of his remarks concerning the Nagari inscriptions need comment. I should also like to take this opportunity to add a few new discoveries.

I have recently acquired a new type of coin that combines the Nagari die of Type I with an Urdu die of Type II: this may be called Type Ia. The specimen used in my note to illustrate Type I had the top right section of the Nagari side not struck up. This was why I did not comment on the spelling of the name of the God. This new piece, which is struck from the same die, shows that the spelling is "Gajadhara". It is identical with Type II, as expected, so Dr. Gupta is wrong in saying that Type I may be distinguished in this way. The new piece also enables me to confirm that the second word is written "Saha" on Type I, and that the third word is written "Jarabi": not "vi", as said by Gupta. On the other types it is not completely clear whether "ba" or "va" has been used in this word because the specimens I have seen are not well struck at this point. For Types IV and V Dr. Gupta notes correctly that not all the letters of the third word are visible on the specimens illustrated, but he then adds "perhaps the other letters were missing from the dies"; this seems highly unlikely, and I would suggest that the letters are either not struck up on the specimens examined, or are off the flan.

Another new specimen is dated 1925 and has "la" at the end of the third line, a feature only present for Type III of my previous note. Although it is not possible to say for certain how the top two lines are arranged on this piece, the placing of the "ji" in "Gadadharaji" slightly to the right of "Sri" in the top line indicates that the "ra" may be on line 2, rather than on line 1. This would be yet another arrangement of the Nagari inscription. I can also add that I have seen no specimens dated 1926 that show which line the "la" of "Kalam" is on. But one specimen dated 1927 shows the "la" at the beginning of the fourth line. It is therefore certain that my Type V should be sub-divided; but from the specimens I have examined it is not possible to say in precisely what manner.

In conclusion it is clear that the variations in spelling of the Nagari words are not as great as Dr. Gupta has suggested and that the two changes which do occur between Types I, II and III differentiated in my previous note were to correct the worst errors. The other curious features of the Nagari spelling pointed out by Dr. Gupta may be explained if we assume that the designer of the coins and/or the die-cutter were not familiar with the Nagari script.

In Jammu and Kashmir at this period the scripts in common use were Urdu and Gurmukhi, whereas in Ladakh itself Tibetan was the normal script. The use of Nagari is quite exceptional, so it is probable that the mint officials made unintentional errors; thus no further implications should be drawn from this spelling.

Kathmandu Mint Tokens

by Dr. Robert Domrow

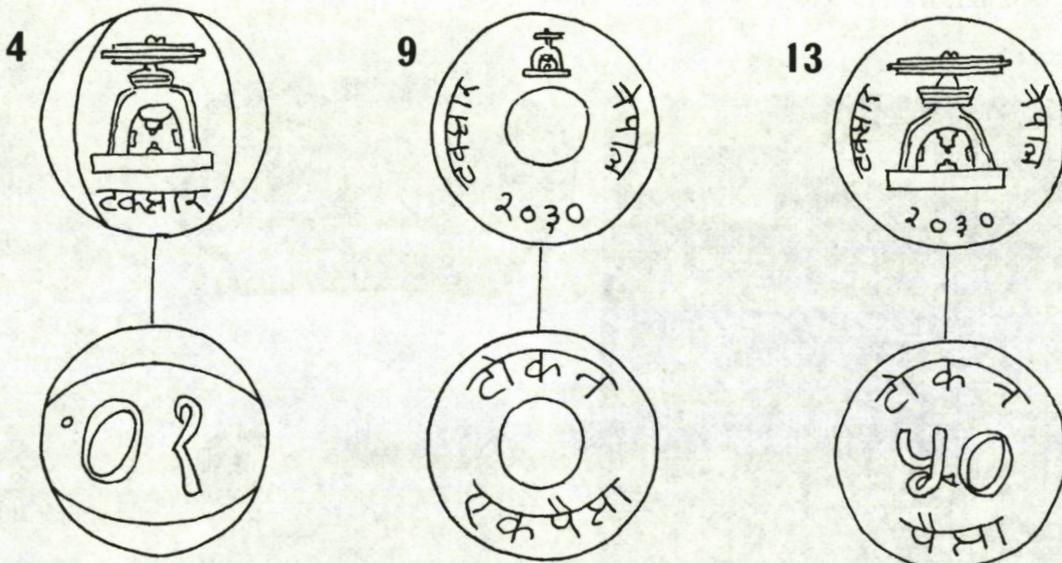
Krause and Mishler list three holed tokens "believed to have been for internal usage within the Kathmandu Mint". These bear the regal title SRI SRI SRI PRITHVI VIRI VI/KRAMA SAHA DEVA 1824: complete on the brass 16 paisa, but truncated at / on the iron 12 and 14 paisa. The Saka date corresponds to AD 1902.

Two other series of tokens were issued. From what I understand across the language gap in the Durbar Square, the first (nos. 4, 5, & 7 below) is incomplete, the second (nos. 9 - 13) is complete. The first is un-dated, but cannot be earlier than Samvat 1989 (AD 1932) when decimal currency was introduced. The second type is dated Samvat 2030 (AD 1973). The types are as follows : -

4. Obverse: large coin press over TAKSAR (all legends are written in Nepali), both in relief on an incuse vertical cartouche.
Reverse: large 0.1 outlined in relief on an incuse horizontal cartouche.
Rim raised (no beading): edge plain.
Aluminium (not holed): 17 mm., 0.6 grammes.
5. As no. 4, but rev. 0.05: Aluminium, 18 mm., 0.8 gm.
6. number reserved
7. As no. 4, but rev. .25: Brass, 20 mm., 3.1 gm.
8. number reserved
9. Obverse: small coin press above; 2030 below: TAKSAR to left, NEPAL to right: all in relief.
Reverse: TOKEN above, EKA PAISA below: both in relief.
Rims both raised (no beading), edges plain, Aluminium (holed): 18 and 6 mm., 0.7 grammes.
10. Obverse: as no. 9, but large coin press above 2030, TAKSAR to left, NEPAL to right.
Reverse: as no. 9, but TOKEN above, PAISA below: large 5 outlined in relief.
Rim raised (no beading), edge plain. Aluminium (not holed), 18 mm., 0.8 grammes.
11. As no. 10, but rev. 10. Brass, 18 mm., 0.8 gm.
12. As no. 10, but rev. 25. Brass, 20 mm., 3.0 gm.
13. As no. 10, but rev. 50. Cupronickel, 20 mm., 3.1 gm.

Mr. W. M. M. Deacock, Hon. Royal Nepalese Consul General in Australia, equated the word "taksar" with mint (litt.), while Cpl. Mambahadur Gurung of the Queen's Gurkha Engineers and LCpl. Anand Rai of the 7th. Gurkha Rifles (whom I met by chance in New Guinea while participating in Operation DRAKE), gave the meaning of this word as the King's private compound or town, which would certainly have included the mint. I would therefore translate "Taksar Nepal" as Royal Nepalese Mint.

All the pieces discussed above are in my cabinet. The drawings are not to scale.



Two Chinese packsaddle sycee made during the "era of the People's State": circa 1912 - 1933

by Michael Mitchiner

Packsaddle sycee form a distinctive class of Chinese silver currency that was manufactured in Yunnan province (south-west China) and used extensively in pursuance of commerce along the Yunnan-Burma-N. Thailand trade route. This particular form of sycee came into use when the administration of Yunnan province had been re-organised following the rebellions of the 1860's and 1870's (perhaps even later) and it remained in use until the Tael was de-monetised in 1933.

Packsaddle sycee bear three identical main stamps, one inverted relative to the other two, plus two smaller authorisation stamps. Two of the three main stamps appear at the depressed ends of the oval sycee. The plateau that forms the centre of the sycee bears the third main stamp with an authorisation stamp on either side.

The main stamp is normally the inscription of the issuing banking house rendered in an 8-character inscription. Many varieties exist¹. The left hand column of four characters is normally a prefix that was common to many banking houses: for instance "Pure silver marked for exchange". The actual name of the banking house appears in the four characters of the right hand column with the suffix either "Hao" (mark) or "Chi" (account). The sycee shown here follow this standard pattern, but instead of bearing the name of the issuing bank these sycee were stamped in the name of the Chinese Republic.

The pair of authorisation stamps on packsaddle sycee also follow a standard format. Both authorisation stamps are usually, but not always, the same as each other and they bear a five-character inscription. This inscription shows two main forms; either "Kung - ku" + 3-character name of officials, or "Kuan Kung - ku" + 2-character name of officials. Kung-ku means 'publicly estimated' and is also the name given to an assay office. So the inscriptions on the authorisation stamps can be read 'Assay office + name' and 'Official assay office + name'.

The two sycee shown here may be described as follows -

AR Packsaddle sycee of 5 Taels weighing 188.0 and 197.0 grammes

left column: Hui Hao Weng Yin
'Pure silver marked for exchange'
right column: Min Kuo Nien Tsao
'Manufactured in the era of the People's State'

匯 豐 銀 行 銀
民 國 年 造

The same authorisation stamps appear on each specimen and each is countermarked 'Fa-hsing'

1. See, for instance, M. Mitchiner, Oriental coins and their values; Non-Islamic States and Western Colonies, nos. 4057 - 4085: further references are cited there.

