

CHAPTER III

THE COINSHistorical Context

The development of an urbanized society, organized under a central authority dependant on Indian tradition for its mandate to rule, and, to a certain extent, on external trade for its wealth, encouraged the evolution of a stable currency based on the Indian model. Although Phayre and Temple regarded the early coins found in Arakan and in Burma proper as medals bearing religious symbols,¹ we now have evidence of a series beginning by the 5th century and continuing, with very few breaks, for the next six hundred years.

The earliest Arakanese coins are connected with contemporary types from Funan and the Mon² and Pyu kingdoms, to which it will be necessary to refer to in detail, as no serious comparative study has yet been attempted. All bear auspicious symbols of Indian kingship and its function of assuring the prosperity of the realm. The Arakan series, initially adapting these motifs, introduces the practice of inscribing the coins with the name of the ruler.³ These coins are especially valuable to the study of Arakanese history, as they confirm and supplement the evidence of the inscriptions, and, to some extent, enhance our knowledge of the development of the script.

¹ Sir Arthur P. Phayre, "Coins of Arakan, of Pegu and of Burma", *The International Numismata Orientalia* Series, London, 1882, pp.1-2; Sir Richard Carnac-Temple, "Currency and Coinage among the Burmese", *IA*, Vol.XXVII (June 1897), pp.154-5; "Notes on Currency and Coinage among the Burmese", *IA*, Vol.LVIII (March 1928) pp.37-39.

² We are not concerned here with the commemorative medallions issued by the kings of Dvāravati, vide, e.g. *JSS*, Vol.LII, pt.1, pp.99 ff.

³ "Some Sanskrit Inscriptions of Arakan", *BSOAS*, XI (1944), pp.383-4.

The earliest (and only) references to metal currency in Burma are found in Chinese histories describing the Pyu kingdom in the 9th century. The New T'ang History mentions that the Pyus "make coins from silver and gold, shaped like the half-moon called *teng-chia-t'o* or *tzu'u-t'an-t'o*" (蓬伽位 or 足彈陀),⁴ while the *Man-shu* only mentions silver. Although no gold coins have yet been discovered at Pyu sites, a single specimen exists in the British Museum Collection.⁵ Temple took *teng-chia-t'o* to be a transliteration of the Sanskrit *ṭaṅka*, "a weight or a stamped coin".⁶ The same word survives in many of the old western languages of Burma (including Sak and Chin), where it usually means silver.⁷ Temple's low regard for early Burmese technology led him to assume that "the 'crescent silver' consisted in reality of chips from lumps of *ywetnī* or *dain*, i.e. 'flowered silver'. These lumps, as they come from the crucible, are generally flat and circular". While all the extant Pyu coins are round, the half-moon shape may have been the result of clipping them into smaller "denominations", a practice well known in Funan, Java and Arakan.⁸ Luce noted that O.B. *klyap*, used in Pagán inscriptions to denote a quantity of silver used for commercial exchange, ought to mean something

⁴ *Hsin-t'ang-shu* 222 (II), p.66 (Po-na ed.), cf. Luce, "The Ancient Pyu", *JBRs*, Vol.XXVII, iii (1937), p.251; R.C. Temple, op.cit. (1897), p.233.

⁵ Luce, "Ancient Pyu", and his translation of the *Man-shu*, p.90. The B.M. coin was acquired along with other Pyu coins in the Ayre collection from Thailand, but its original provenance is obviously Burma.

⁶ Op.cit., p.235 ff. He then attempts to prove the derivation of a number of modern terms for currency in India and Southeast Asia (e.g. Burmese *dīṅga*, Anglo-Indian *tickal*) from *ṭaṅka*; cf. Shorto, *DMI*, s.v. *dinkel*.

⁷ Luce, "The Advent of Buddhism to Burma" in L. Cousins et. al. (eds), *Buddhist Studies in Honour of I.B. Horner*, p.120.

⁸ Op.cit., p.233, fn.7; cf. Malleret, *ADM*, t.III, pp.137-8; Paul Pelliot, *Deux itinéraires* ..., pp.316-7.

pressed between two surfaces.⁹ The Burmese weight standard, the *viss* (O.B. *piśā, sā*), is derived from the Tamil *vīśai* "division", and O.B. *buih*, probably one-tenth of a *viss*, from Pali-Tamil *pāla*.¹⁰ This is interesting in that the early Southeast Asian coin types seem to have been based on South Indian models.

The use of die-struck coins seems to have disappeared with the fall of the early Indianized kingdoms: the last coins we have from Arakan belong to the 9th or 10th centuries, roughly contemporary with the Mon coins from Pegu, and use of a coin currency apparently dwindled to nothing during the Pagan period; there are no local coins from the rest of mainland Southeast Asia after the fall of Funan and Dvāravatī, their function being replaced by barter, cowrie shells and standardized metal bars or lumps.¹¹ It was not until the 16th century, probably under the influence of Muslim and European traders, that coins began to come into use again.¹²

Collections, Finds etc.

While the earliest Arakanese coins bear a certain resemblance to those from later Pyu and Mon sites, none have yet been discovered outside the state. The inscribed coins, from Devacandra to Dharmmavijaya, are also known almost only in Arakan, and are most

⁹ "Economic Life of the Early Burman", *JBRS*, XXX, 1940. repr., p.337 and n.87. Although Luce tended to consider that *klyap* meant a weight, rather than a coin, the first *coins* from Pagan were found among the *trésor* of the pagodas after the recent earthquake.

¹⁰ Hobson-Jobson, s.v. *viss*; Luce, loc.cit.

¹¹ Reginald Le May, *The Coinage of Siam* (Bangkok, 1932), pp.3-9; Temple, op.cit., pp.154-57.

¹² The earliest of these are from Arakan and Cambodia [see Phayre, op.cit., and Groslier, *Recherches sur les Cambodgiens* (Paris, 1921) p.32] while Burma and Thailand did not replace their punch-marked metal bars until the 19th century.

frequently found in the Mrohaung district. Two notable exceptions were uncovered in excavations at Mainamatī near Comilla, along with the bulk of the connected Harikela ("Yarikriya") coins.¹³ The latter are also found in Arakan, frequently along the seacoast. The last coins of the series, those of Śrī Siṃhagaṇḍacandra, are known only from one hoard found near Akyab.

The most important collections have been published. Of these, the most extensive is the British Museum Collection (BMC),¹⁴ of which Phayre's collection formed the nucleus. The Indian Museum, Calcutta (IMC)¹⁵ has a fairly well documented collection, as does the White King Collection (WKC) now in the Hermitage at Leningrad.¹⁶ The Harikela coins from the Mainamatī excavations, now at the Mainamatī museum, are not yet published, but a number of identical types are found in the important collections. Scholars in Britain have studied the private collection of Mr H. de S. Shortt, and R.D. Banerji published five Arakan-type coins from the cabinet of Mr Prafulla Nath Tagore.

A number of important collections in Burma remain unnoticed. The most extensive of these belongs to the Arakanese historian U Aung Tha Oo of Rangoon. Other scholars have small collections, but the most fruitful source has been the monasteries of upper Arakan. Here generations of *sayadaws* interested in the history of their country have accumulated chance finds made throughout the centuries. Interest

¹³ See above, p.126-30

¹⁴ See Johnston, loc.cit.

¹⁵ V.A. Smith, *Cat. of Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta*, I (Oxford, 1906), p.331 and Pl.XXXI, 9, 10, 11, 16.

¹⁶ A catalogue of the White King Collection is mentioned by Rustom in her article "Some Coins of Arakan", *Nation Supplement* (Rangoon), Nov.11 1962. I have not been able to locate this, but R.C. Temple, who was able to inspect the collection before it went to Russia, has described many of the coins in *IA*, Vol.LVII, pp.37, 41-3.

in the coins in Burma has most recently been stimulated by U San Tha Aung, in his publications on the antiquities of Arakan.

Work to Date

Western interest in the coins of Arakan began soon after the British annexation, and various reports appeared in the *JASB*. Lieut. Thos. Latter, author of the *Burmese Grammar*, noticed the similarity of the symbolical Pyu coins of Halin (Haleng) and the inscribed Arakan coins, which, he said, were "Shivite, but probably appertain to a time when the emblems of the worship of Shiva, and those of Buddhism had something in common".¹⁷ Captain G.E. Fryer, Officiating Deputy Commissioner of Sandoway, described the first "Yarikriya" coin to be found, and attributed the inscribed coins to the Candra dynasty mentioned in the Arakanese chronicles.¹⁸ Another "Yarikriya" coin was mentioned by W. Theobald, who described it as a "symbolical coin of the Wethali dynasty of Arakan".¹⁹

In 1882 Phayre published his "Coins of Arakan, of Pegu and of Burma", mentioned before. He was followed by Temple, who in spite of all the evidence accumulated by 1928, held the view that the "symbolical coins" of Arakan and Burma proper had been first introduced by Bodawpaya.²⁰

This was soon refuted by U Mya, who drew attention to the antiquity of the sites where the coins were found, and suggested that the symbols were auspicious signs.²¹ E.H. Johnston first put the coins

¹⁷ "The Coins of Arakan - The Symbolical Coins", *JASB*, 1846, pp.238-40.

¹⁸ "Note on an Arakanese Coin", *JASB*, 1872, pp.201-3.

¹⁹ W. Theobald, "On a Symbolical Coin of the Wethali dynasty of Arakan", *JASB*, Vol.61, 1892, pp.102-4.

²⁰ *IA*, Vol.LVII, pp.37-43.

²¹ *ASI*, 1930-34, pt II, pp.331-35.

in chronological order, and suggested Veṅgī prototypes.²² G.A. Rustom, working with the then unpublished results of McDowell, definitely established that the coins were not "medals" but currency issued in several denominations.²³ MacDowell, who studied a hoard of Arakan-type coins from Sylhet, added to our knowledge of the "Yarikriya" coins,²⁴ but it was not until Harunur Rashid analysed the hundreds of coins found during the excavations at Mainamatī in the 1960's that the connection between these and the coins from Arakan was established.²⁵

Metal and weight standards

All the early coins are of silver, with practically no impurities, which would indicate a plentiful source throughout the period.²⁶ A single gold and a few copper specimens of "Yarikriya" coins were found in later levels of the Salban Vihara excavations, reflecting the influence of Indian currency in the late period. Apart from the general description of "silver" for the Pyu and Mon coins, no other satisfactory data is available.²⁷ Malleret identified a number of silver-mine sites in South Annam, various parts of Cambodia and in Laos.²⁸ The silver mines of northern Burma are well known, and probably

²² Op.cit., p.357.

²³ Loc.cit.

²⁴ D.W. McDowell, "Eight Coins of Arakan from Sylhet", *Numismatic Chronicle*, Vol.20 (1960), pp.229-34, and Pl.XVI.

²⁵ Harunur Rashid, *The Early History of Southeast Bengal in the Light of Recent Archaeological Material* (PhD Dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1968), unpublished. Appendix II.

²⁶ Tests carried out in the Dept. of Prehistory, I.A.S., A.N.U., revealed a 99% silver content on 1 Prīticandra and 2 Nīticandra coins.

²⁷ Temple described one "Pegu" type coin and two Pyu coins as "spelter" (*tutenaga*) but no other writer has commented on this (see *IA*, LVII, p.37).

²⁸ *ADM*, t.III, p.129.

supplied the Pyus with their needs.²⁹ The Mons of Southern Burma may have obtained their silver from Bassein.³⁰ While no comprehensive geological survey of Arakan has been undertaken to date, tradition has it that there are gold and silver mines.³¹ Phayre (p.38) reported that before the British annexation, silver was the principal circulating medium for larger payments. In 1852, the town of Prome, with a population of about 20,000, had twenty *pwézás*, or brokers and assayers of silver.

The initial exploitation of Southeast Asian silver for export can be seen as a direct result of the abrupt cessation of the Roman bullion trade with India in the middle of the 1st century A.D.³² Silver coins, both local and Roman, are absent from the Indian assemblage immediately after this period. Wheeler has shown that Roman coins were used not as an imposed currency but as bullion of a quality and weight guaranteed by the imperial stamp.³³ The Roman weight standard of 8.035g. was

²⁹ H.L. Chhibber, *The Mineral Resources of Burma* (London, 1934), Ch.VIII passim; P. Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese* (K.L., 1961), p.117. A number of Pyu coins have been found in the Shan states, vide *ASI*, 1930-34, pt.2, pp.332, 335.

³⁰ Charles Paton, in his "Historical and Statistical Sketch of Arakan" (*Asiatic Researches*, Vol.XVI (1828), p.379), noticed that "Gold dust and silver, in grains, are found in the nullahs at Bassein: all those employed in gathering the precious metals pay each twelve rupees in gold, for the privilege, as no one is allowed to collect the dust without a *purwannah* from the King. The process is managed by a tray, about half an inch deep, which is filled with sand, and taken into the stream, where the sand is moved about, and carried away by water, the metals remaining at the bottom".

³¹ R.B. Smart, *Burma Gazetteer - Akyab District*, Volume A (Rangoon, 1917), p.142. With the increasing interest in oil production and the hydroelectric potential of Arakan no doubt a detailed geological survey will appear soon.

³² G. Coëdes, *Indianized states ...*, p 20.

³³ *Ancient India*, No.4 (1947), p.287.

adopted by the Kuṣāṇas and by the early Guptas.³⁴ Unfortunately, reliable records of weights of early South Indian coins are not available, but it appears that some of the early uninscribed coins of Southeast Asia could have conformed to the Roman standard. Although the weights of the early Southeast Asian coins were rarely recorded, the scanty evidence we have suggests that the weight standard was fairly uniform throughout the area, and fell gradually as silver became scarcer.

The *Baddapitha*/*Śrīvatsa* coins from Pyu sites in the BMC weigh, on average, 10.5g, 5.05g. and 2.7g. The BMC sun/*Śrīvatsa* coins from Burma average 9.9g, while those from Oc-Ēo vary from 9.6 to 7.8g, averaging approximately 8.4g, close to the Roman standard.³⁵ One coin of the same type from Dvāravatī weighs 7.5g.³⁶ Two specimens "from Burma" in the IMC weigh 7.9g.³⁷ Of the conch/*Śrīvatsa* coins found principally at Mon sites, the BMC Pegu specimens weigh 9.9 and 9.8g, one from Thailand described by Guehler 8.8g.³⁸ and two examples from Oc-Ēo 8.6g.³⁹ A conch and *Śrīvatsa* coin from Arakan in the BMC, possibly inscribed with DEVA, weighs 5g., conforming to what must be the early Pyu standard.

³⁴ D.C. Sircar, *Studies in Indian Coins* (Delhi, 1968), pp.12, 14.

³⁵ ADM, t.III, p.137; cf. G. Groslier, *Recherches sur les Cambodgiens* (Paris, 1921), p.32, figs. 8 and 9 and pp.37-38, who describes two coins of this type weighing 7.7g. and 9.7g.

³⁶ U. Guehler, "Further Studies on Old Thai Coins", *JSS*, Vol.XXXV, pt.2 (1944), pl.X, figs 2a, 2b.

³⁷ V.A. Smith, *Cat. of Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta*, Vol.I (Oxford, 1906), p.333 and Pl.XXXI, 16; B.B. Bidyabinod, *Suppl. Cat. of Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta*, Non-Muhammadan Series, Vol.1 (Calcutta, 1923), p.99, no.8.

³⁸ Op.cit., Pl.X, figs 3a, 3b.

³⁹ ADM, t.III, p.135.

TABLE 1* - COMPARATIVE WEIGHTS OF EARLY SOUTHEAST ASIAN COINS

Gm. 10.6 10.5 10.0 9.9 9.8 9.7 9.6 9.2 9.0 8.8 8.7 8.6 8.3 8.2 7.9 7.7 7.6 7.5 5.0 4.1 2.7 2.6 2.2

Pyu Baddha- pitha/Srivatsa	x	x												x					xx	x	xx	y	xx
Pyu Sun/ Srivatsa			x	xx xx	x											xx							
Funan Sun/ Srivatsa						x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					
Mon Thailand Sun/Srivatsa																		x					
Funan Conch/ Srivatsa												x	x										
Mon Thailand Conch/ Srivatsa										x													
Mon Burma Conch/ Srivatsa											xx												

* based on information in the text and Pyu weights from the BMC

TABLE 2* - COMPARATIVE WEIGHTS OF THE CANDRA AND HARIKELA COINS

Gm.	7.6	7.4	7.3	7.2	7.1	7.0	6.9	6.8	6.7	6.6	6.5	6.4	6.3	5.0	4.7	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.0
Uninscribed Arakan														x										
Devacandra															x									
Nāticandra		x							x						x	xx x	xx	xx x		x		cc		x
Viracandra													c					xx			c			
Prāticandra																xx x	xx	c	cx				c	
Prthvicandra																		x						
Dhrticandra												c				x								
Dharmmavijaya				c																				
Dharmmacandra	x	x																						
Harikela (wreath)			cc x	c	c				c	c	x													
Harikela (no wreath)						xx xx	x	x		x														

x signifies a coin in reasonable condition, c a clipped specimen

* based on MacDowell's table of the weights of Candra and "Yarikriya" coins in the BMC, IMC and H. de S. Shortt Collection, Numismatic Chronicle XX, p.234, and information given in the text.

Of the earlier Bull coins, a half-size specimen also issued by Devacandra in the BMC weighs 4.734⁴⁰g., suggesting a full size of about 9.5g. The standard appears to have fallen again during the reign of Bhūmi or Bhūticandra, when the sizes of the coins changed. The succeeding Candra kings struck coins to a standard of about 7.6g. and were followed in this by the early kings of Harikela, who issued identical coins. The later Harikela kings again lowered the standard to between 7.2 and 7.0g.⁴¹

The large number of clipped coins in the Arakan collection also indicates that as the weight standard decreased in the later period coins were clipped to conform to the lower standard.

The latest coins, issued by Śrī Siṃghagandacandra towards the end of the 9th century, are a crude mixture of approximately 80 per cent silver and 20 per cent copper, probably heated over a low fire as there is little diffusion of metals. The debased quality of these is a reflection of the precarious position of this little known dynasty.

It is also significant that the early Southeast Asian coins were executed at a comparable technical standard to the coins of the early Pallavas, a series unequalled before or after in South Indian numismatics for clarity of design and finish. Production techniques of these double die-struck coins in all probability did not change much over the centuries. In this context it is interesting to note Paton's description of the mint at Mrohaung ("Aracan") at the beginning of the 19th century.

The mint was in *Aracan*, and any person was allowed to take bullion to it, for the purpose of being coined, paying five per cent of the state: the process of

⁴⁰ C.A. Rustom, loc.cit.

⁴¹ Vide MacDowell, op.cit., pp.231-2.

coining was very tedious; the silver after being melted, was cut into small pieces, then weighed and beat out to the proper size: the coin was then placed between two dyes, and with the stroke of a heavy hammer, the impression was effected: when the whole of the establishment was employed, they could with difficulty make two thousand rupees per day.⁴²

Origins and Significance of the Symbols

The introduction of a standardized metal currency was the result of trade with India, and thus Indian symbols of kingship and prosperity were borrowed to legitimize the function of the coinage. These symbols, recognized in Indian numismatics as dynastic emblems and religious or auspicious motifs, generally derive from the ancient collection of signs denoting fertility and prosperity.⁴³ As these were gradually incorporated into the symbolism of kingship and the Hindu tradition, their function is often misinterpreted. The conch, for example, is usually seen as an indication of Vaiṣṇavism, but was originally a water symbol connected with fertility and used in royal lustration ceremonies. As such it was used by Buddhist kings and later in Buddhist ritual.

It must also be remembered that the divine aspects of the king were emphasized more in Southeast Asia than in India. Although Malleret has summarized the various interpretations of symbols used on early Southeast Asian coins,⁴⁴ his concern to emphasize the Scythian connection with Funan and his assumption that all the early coins originated thence has biased his interpretation.⁴⁵

⁴² *op cit*, p.376

⁴³ See below, p.298ff

⁴⁴ *ADM*, t.III, pp.133ff.

⁴⁵ Although the numbers of sun/*śrīvatsa* coins found in excavations of the Funan and Pyu sites are similar, a far greater quantity of surface finds have been reported in Burma, and relatively few have been found at Mon sites in Thailand.

There is no doubt that motifs used by the "Scythian" kings in India found their way to Southeast Asia. These include the beaded surround, the conch shell with or without protruding flora, the rayed wheel of the sun, the *aṅkuśa*, swastika and auxiliary sun and moon motifs. Most of these elements however were present on the early Indian punch-marked coins and simply belong to a common tradition. "Scythian" features like the beaded surround were adopted by the Gupta kings and the early Pallavas. The early Southeast Asian coins have more in common with the latter: neither use the likeness of the king, or even anthropomorphic depictions of gods; the coins are often not inscribed and there are no indications of mint markings. The symbols used can be divided into two groups, the motifs directly connected with kingship and prosperity usually in a dominant position: *śrīvatsa*, conch, bull, *aṅkuśa*, *cāmara*, *baddhapitha* and secondary motifs associated with Purāṇic cosmology: the four great continents, sun and moon, the seven great rivers, and the ocean, either a series of wavy lines or a fish, tortoise or lotus. These would seem to illustrate the idea of the king as a microcosm of the universe and guarantor of prosperity in the country. An exception may be found in the rising sun motif of the Pyu coins and identical types found at Funanese and Dvāravatī Mon sites. This may tentatively be seen to represent the solar origin of the dynasty, as the motif was rejected by the Candra (presumably lunar) dynasty of Arakan, who replaced it with the bull, and by the Mons, who used the conch.⁴⁶ A description of each of the symbols used on the Arakanese coins is necessary to establish their origins, meaning and connections.

⁴⁶ It has been suggested that the Vikramas and Varmans of the Pyu epigraphs were tanists dividing the realm between them. (Shorto, "The 32 *Myos* in the medieval Mon kingdom" *BSOAS* XXI V, 3, p.580.) The two obverse motifs on Pyu coins, *baddhapitha* and rising sun, imply that each dynasty had a different emblem. The title "King of the Rising Sun" was given to Pyu and Burmese kings traditionally descended from Mahāsamanta, founder of the solar Sakyan family of Gautama Buddha. See *GPC* pp.38-39; *Konbaungset Mahārajawantawkrī* (Rangoon 1967 ed.) I, pp10 15-16 II, pp.424-5, III p.437; Geiger *Mahāvamsa*, App.A.

The Śrīvatsa motif

Plate XXV

The common link between the Funan, Dvāravatī, Pyu and Arakan coins is the *śrīvatsa* motif, which appears on the reverse (or obverse) of all the early examples in different forms. The significance of the symbol is important, as it explains, in part, the diversity of forms it takes, the identification of which has confused most scholars.⁴⁷

Śrīvatsa may be taken to mean the symbol of the abode of Śrī, the ancient mother goddess, promoter of fertility and prosperity. The *śrīvatsa* itself is common to Buddhist and Hindu iconography, and is foremost among the symbols of Indian kingship. The anthropomorphic equivalent is the well known *abhiṣeka* of Śrī, commonly depicted in Indian and Southeast Asian sculpture as the goddess, seated on a lotus, being sprayed by two elephants. As a symbol, it is noticed on the earliest coins of India, among the symbols of early Buddhist and Jain aniconic art, and on the chest of Buddha and Viṣṇu images.⁴⁸ In paleography, the symbol was used together with the swastika to denote the formula *Svasti Śrī* at the beginning of inscriptions.⁴⁹ When a worthy king was crowned, Śrī was considered to enter him to ensure the fertility and wealth of the country.⁵⁰

While forms of the symbol may have derived from the "double Y" in the Taxila coins, or the "nāga symbol" of the northern tribal coins

⁴⁷ The different interpretations (e.g. Śiva's trident, *nāga* symbol, ornamental *triśūla*, shield, fire altar, *vardhāmana*) have been discussed by U Mya, op.cit., p.333; Malleret, *ADM*, t.III, p.134; R.D. Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography* (Calcutta, 1956), pp.190, 376.

⁴⁸ R.D. Banerjea, loc.cit.

⁴⁹ Sivaramamurti, *Aspects of Indian Culture* (New Delhi, 1969), pp.51-2.

⁵⁰ E.g. *Raghuvaṃśa* III, 36; VI, 29; XVII, 46; XVIII, 8.

(plXXXV,5) ,⁵¹ it first appears in its usual "shield" form on Kharavela's 1st century B.C. inscription at Udayagiri cave in Orissa. (XXXV,1), and on the famous torana at Sanchi(XXXV,2).⁵²

The immediate prototype for the Southeast Asian form is found on coins from Chandravalli, in the Chitaldrug District of northern Karnataka, from strata associated with the Sātavāhana kings of the 2nd century A.D. An identical type was found in Āndhradeśa, between the Kistna and Godavari rivers. (XXXV, 3-4)⁵³. U Aung Thaw has remarked on the many parallels between the culture of this region and that of early Pyu sites.⁵⁴ The "Śrīvatsa and rising sun" coins common to Oc-Êo, U-Thông, Beikthano, Halin and Śrīksetra, have the typical shield outline enclosing a stylized human figure. We are tempted to identify this with Śrī herself, as in early medieval south Indian sculpture the "shield" form of the śrīvatsa symbol becomes an image in its own right.⁵⁵ Here, the curled ends of the symbol simulate the arms

⁵¹ Allan, *Catalogue of the Indian Coins in the British Museum* (Oxford, 1936, repr. 1967), Index IV.

⁵² ASB, 1959-60, p.39.

⁵³ R.E.M. Wheeler, "Brahmagiri and Chandravalli 1947: Megalithic and other cultures in the Chitaldrug Dist., Mysore State, Ancient India 4 (1948), pp.287 ff., Pl.CXXVIII, 29, 33, 35. Cf. E.J. Rapson, *Brit. Mus. Cat. of Coins of the Āndhra Dynasty* (London, 1908), Pl.VIII, 207. The importance of the śrīvatsa and allied symbols, fish, water, conch, vajra etc., to the Sātavāhana dynasty from the time of the founder, Simukha Sātavāhana, has been dealt with by Karthikeya Sarma, "The names 'Sātavāhana', 'Satakarṇi' and the Significance of the 'Śrīvatsa' symbol on the Sātavāhana coinage", Paper submitted to the 59th Annual Session of the Numismatic Society of India (Nagpur 1970); see also his "Regional Distribution, Sequence, Chronology and Historical Significance of the Sātavāhana Coinage" in A.M. Shastri (ed.), *Coinage of the Sātavāhanas and Coins from Excavations* (Nagpur, 1972), p.78.

⁵⁴ Op.cit., pp.64 ff.

⁵⁵ Banerjea, op.cit., p.376 and Pl.XIX, figs 1, 2 and 3; Sivaramamurti, op.cit., pp.51-2, fig. 42.

and legs, the upper point is rounded and crowned, and facial features and a prominent necklace are also apparent. (cf. XXXV, 9 and 10-12)

As the coin types became regionalised, the centre symbol took different forms. In the typical Dvāravatī coins, it looks like a bunch of three stalks, tied in the centre (XXXV, 20, 25, 26). Malleret has identified this as a *vajra*⁵⁶. The Halin and Śrīksetran series have nine dots, arranged in groups of three (XXXV, 18, 19) which may be of cosmological significance. Yet another type found at Pyu sites has, within the *śrīvatsa* outline, a symbol identified by Guehler as the "moon, sun and fire" representation of the sacred syllable *Om* (XXXV, 27)⁵⁷. The type found mainly on specimens from Lower Burma, generally known as "Pegu" coins⁵⁸, shows a close connection (through the *śaṅkha* symbol on the reverse) with the coins from Mon sites in Thailand, but has, within the outline, a symbol identified by Johnston as the *aṅkuśa* (XXXV, 28)⁵⁹

The transition from the *śrīvatsa* outline with an enclosed symbol to the tripartite form can be traced in Pyu coins of the 5th century and later. Initially, the figure within the surround common in the earlier coins becomes a dot, line and triangle seen in a single coin at Beikthano (XXXV, 15 cf 7, 14)⁶⁰. An almost identical form is

⁵⁶ ADM t. III, pp. 130ff

⁵⁷ "Notes on Old Siamese Coins" JSS, Vol. XXXVII, pt. 1 (1948) pp. 1-25 and pl. VII

⁵⁸ Phayre, op. cit., p. 33 and pl. IV, 6, 7.

⁵⁹ Johnston, op. cit. p. 384. Malleret (ADM t. III, p. 132) disagreed with this interpretation, although identical forms of the elephant goad are common in the Oc-Eo assemblage, on cameos, and, significantly, on gaming dice which also bear other auspicious symbols: the vase, the pair of fishes, conch, sun, swastika and *śrīvatsa*. Cf. his pl. LXXIII (no. 1308) and pl. X in t. III. An *aṅkuśa* similarly adorned with ribbons appears on the Veśālī *abhiseka* plaque; see pl. LXXXVII.

⁶⁰ The Beikthano coin was found within the rubble filling of Stūpa KKG 3. Stylistically, it shows a development from the Halin type →

found on the earliest coins from Arakan, issued by Devacandra (c. 454-476 A.D.). Here, the upper corners are rounded and there is a protuberance at the apex.(XXXV,23) In the Pyu coins, the central triangle becomes a cylinder, pointed at the top, mounted on a base and with four dots at each side,(XXXV,7) a symbol variously described as a Śiva *linga* or a representation of the Bawbawgyi stūpa.⁶¹ In Arakan, however, the central triangle becomes a diamond shape,⁶² which, in the later coins of Devacandra, evolves into a vertical extending from the base line, broadening to a diamond at the centre and at the apex XXXVII,1 and XXXVIII,1-2)

The transition to the tripartite form of *Śrīvatsa* can also be seen in India at this period. A variant of the protuding triangle type is found on terracotta sealings from Basarh, in strata datable between the 4th and 6th centuries.⁶³ The tripartite form is also used on sealings found in the same context,⁶⁴ and on the chest of Viṣṇu images in the Gupta idiom of the 5th century.⁶⁵ An almost identical form of the

⁶⁰ (contd)

and was found together with a coin of the Śrīkṣetra type. The last phase of occupation at Beikthano, and the first at Śrīkṣetra, was during the 5th century. See U Aung Thaw, op.cit., p.54 and figure 84, 3.

⁶¹ Cf. the drawing of a small coin found at Beikthano in *IA*, LVII, Pl.IIIa, the moulded terracotta disc from Śrīkṣetra, *ASI*, 1910-11, pp.90 ff. and Pl.XVIII, 9, 10, and coins found in Bawbawgyi reliquaries, *Arch. Negs.* 904/5 (1910-11), 987/8 (1911-12). A single specimen is also known from Halin acquired by the Burma Historical Commission from a villager of Tagan tha, N. of the old city.

⁶² Cf. Phayre, op.cit., Pl.II, figs 9, 11. (Plate XXXVII,3)

⁶³ Cf. *ASI*, 1903-4, p.110; J.N. Banerjea, op.cit., p.190 and Pl.II, 2; B.P. Sinha and Sita Ram Roy, *Vaisālī Excavations 1958-62* (Patna, 1969), Pl.XXXI, 47 and p.126, from the upper layers of the Period IV strata, c. A.D. 400-600.

⁶⁴ Banerjea, op.cit., Pl.II.

⁶⁵ Sivaramamurti, *loc cit.*

developed Arakan tripartite *Śrīvatsa* is found on a rare coin type from South India.⁶⁶ Here, the symbol has the outer members curved outwards and up, where on the coins they twist under. The central member of both has the two diamond shapes; the South Indian coin, however, has no surrounding foliage but there is some indication of a three-stalked lotus base (XXXV,24). Significantly, the obverse has a humped bull, as do all the Arakan coins from Devacandra onwards.⁶⁷

It should be noted that, after the earliest coins, a water symbol appears under the *Śrīvatsa* in various forms. On the Halin coins, this is usually two curved lines, developing into three or four wavy lines on the *Śrīkṣetra* examples. The large coin from U-Thong has a fish, while the early Arakan coins have a number of vertical lines suggesting a (lotus) stem. This idea is carried further with the foliage sprouting from the top and sides of the *Śrīvatsa* outline. In the later Arakanese coins, the stem is replaced by a row of dots, an accepted rendition of the lotus base indicating the presence of a divinity, in this case, the goddess *Śrī*. The water symbols at the base of these coins supplement the sun and moon symbols nearly always present at the top, and would seem to be connected with the cosmological functions of the king. In Indian coins of this period, the anthropomorphic form of *Śrī* was used in preference to the symbol, reflecting the form of Hindu revivalism at this time.

⁶⁶ First published by S. Ramayya in his paper "The Puzzle of Pallava Coins", *JNSI*, Vol.XXIX, Pt.1, p.30 and Pl.I, 1 "Round, copper probably with some tin mixture".

⁶⁷ Ramayya, on the basis of an almost totally illegible inscription, attributed the coin to "the Pallava feudatories at Kanchi, probably about the time of Yajña Sātakārṇī towards the close of the 2nd century A.D. That the coin belongs to an early Pallava series is certain, but in view of the use of the bull, the Pallava emblem, and the nature of the symbol on the reverse, it should perhaps be attributed to the Prakrit Pallavas of the 4th or 5th centuries.

The *triśūla* type of *śrīvatsa* is commonly used on religious and royal ritual objects in India and Southeast Asia from this period. We find it embossed on a bell found at Śrīksetra, surmounting the handles of Khmer and Central Javanese bells, and as the top-piece of ceremonial standards carried in royal processions on the Borabādur reliefs.⁶⁸ In Bengal, the same symbol appears on terracotta plaques facing the Paharpur temple and the Ānanda Vihāra at Mainamatī.⁶⁹ This form is identical to that of a single *vajra*, and may reflect growing Tantric influence. Blagden suggested that *śrīvatsa* is a corruption of *śrī-vajra*,⁷⁰ which seems feasible in the light of the Mon "*śrī + vajra*" coins. The word *śrīvatsa* appears to have been current by the Gupta period when it appears in the *Viṣṇudharmottaram*. Other forms of the *śrīvatsa* and its function in the ritual of Buddhist kingship in Southeast Asia will be discussed below.

Śaṅkha

(Plate XXXVI)

The conch shell, *śaṅkha*, belongs to the ancient group of water symbols found among the *aṣṭanīdhi* of Śrī Lakṣmī, and later incorporated into the iconography of Kubera, god of wealth,⁷¹ and of Viṣṇu. Common on the seals found at Basarh, Nālandā and Paharpur of the Gupta period and later, it is usually identified as the *Pañcajanya Śaṅkha* of

⁶⁸ Aung Thaw, *Historical Sites* ..., p.32; F.D.K. Bosch, *The Golden Germ* (The Hague, 1960), Pls. 53b, 56, 57a.

⁶⁹ Dikshit, *Excavations at Paharpur* (MASI, no.55), Pl.XLf and LVIIb; T.N. Ramachandrah, "Recent Archaeological Discoveries along the Mainamati and Lalmai Ranges, Tippera Dist., East Bengal", in *B.C. Law Volume*, ed. D.R. Bhandarkar, part 2 (Poona, 1946), Pl.

⁷⁰ Letter to Luce, dated 12th Dec. 1920

⁷¹ Banerjea, *op.cit.*, p.105, fn.1.

Viṣṇu.⁷² This is by no means justified where evidence of a Vaiṣṇavite context is lacking. On coins, the appearance of the *śaṅkha* may indicate the wealth bestowed by Śrī, who, as we have seen, resided within a deserving king.

The conch is comparatively rare on early Indian coins. It appears among symbols surrounding a central lotus on the punch-marked Kadamba *Kaṁalamudrās*⁷³ and later on the reverse of some bull coins usually ascribed to the early Pallavas.⁷⁴ Unfortunately the condition of these coins and their poor reproduction in photographs does not permit adequate description here.

In Southeast Asia, coins with the conch on the obverse and, usually, *śrīvatsa* on the reverse, are mainly found at Mon sites in Thailand and southern Burma, although a few have been discovered at Oc-Ēo, Halin, Śrīkṣetra and in Arakan. The first of these may be Boissellier's "medaille d'argent à la conque" found at U Thônḡ.⁷⁵ Here the apex is depicted by a round dot, under which are three curves of increasing size, forming the upper quarter of the shell. The form bulges around the centre and gradually diminishes to the lower point, from which issues a linear central opening, shaped like a question mark. The symbol is contained within a circle, beyond which is a row of dots. Directly connected with this are the coins found at Nakon

⁷² *JAHRS*, VIII, p.153; *EI*, XXIII, p.56; *ASI*, 1913-14, pp.126-9, 136, 143, 150, 151; K.N. Dikshit, op.cit., p.302.

⁷³ Elliot, op.cit., Pl.I, 8; cf. Vidya Prakash, op.cit., p.40.

⁷⁴ Prakash, ibid., p.49; cf. Abul Wahid Khan, who attempted to allocate these coins to the Viṣṇukunḍins of the first half of the 6th century on the basis of a few letters which are not apparent on his photographs; see *Andhra Pradesh Arch. Series*, 14, Pl.XXVI, and pp.55-7.

⁷⁵ *Arts Asiatiques*, t.XII (1968), fig.26.

Pathom and Prachin Buri, illustrated by Guehler.⁷⁶ Here the conch is more perfectly formed, and is not squashed within the circle as the U Thôn̄g motif is. The central opening does not have the ornate curve of the earlier coin, but otherwise the depiction is quite similar.

Following the westward drift of Mon culture towards lower Burma a coin type very close to the Nakon Pathom style is found, principally around Pegu.⁷⁷ Although the Pegu *śrīvatsa* differs from the Nakon Pathom types (the *aṅkuśa* replacing the *vajra*), the conch is almost identical. On some specimens two loops issue from the top of the shell, the curved aperture reaches the upper bands and has teeth-like markings. Johnston noted that the specimens of this type which he examined were later in appearance than the early Arakan coins. A date around the 9/10th centuries may be appropriate.⁷⁸ He was apparently not aware of the Nakon Pathom coins, which may have influenced the coin types found at Halin, Śrīksetra and Arakan. "Pegu" coins have also been found at Oc-Eo, and among a hoard of late bull and *śrīvatsa* coins probably from Bangladesh (see below, p.181). None have been noticed at Pyu sites. Two coins from Halin described by U Mya are possibly earlier than the Mon conch currency.⁸⁰ The reverse has a 12 spoked wheel within a beaded surround, similar to the sun motif common

⁷⁶ *JSS*, Vol.XXXVII, Pt.2 (1949), pp.124 ff, and Pl.I, figs 3, 4, 5. An unpublished series of slightly concave coins, said to come from Thailand and now at Spinks of London, also have a "squashed conch", on the obverse and the identical "*śrī + vajra*" motif on the reverse. I am grateful to Mr. Joe Cribb of the British Museum for showing me photographs of these.

⁷⁷ Phayre, op.cit., pp.30-33

⁷⁸ Phayre, "On the history of Pegu", *JASB*, Vol.XLIII (1873), p.23.

⁷⁹ *ADM*, t.III, pp.134-5 and XLIV (nos. 948, 949).

⁸⁰ *ASI*, 1930-34, Pt.2, pp.334-5, Pl.CLIV d. Arch. Negs 3701-2 (1933-34).

on Indian coins and seals, but replaced in Southeast Asia by the rising sun design. The obverse has a stylized conch, the outline and not the form raised, surrounded by cosmic and royal symbols: sun, moon, seven rivers (?), mountains, and ? a *cāmara* or *daṇḍa*.⁸¹

The other Pyu conch type was found among coins in the Khinbagôn relic chamber at Śrīksetra, along with images and inscribed plates datable to the 6/7th centuries.⁸² In these coins, the base of the conch has a twist to the right, and the aperture is missing altogether. It arises from what appears to be a stem, exuding branches which surround the shell. This vegetative surround is also apparent on the earliest coins found in Arakan, some of which also have a lower hook on the conch. In this series, we also find ribbon like projections from the top of the shell, which suggested to Phayre "the sankh shell of Viṣṇu, with what is apparently meant to represent a hermit crab at the open part; an appropriate Buddhistic symbol".⁸³ A similar motif is found at Oc-Èo in various contexts.⁸⁴ Although Coomaraswamy regarded the conch on lotus to symbolize the *sūtra* borne by the *padma*, "the universal ground of existence and birthplace of Life in the Worlds",

⁸¹ U Mya recorded, in this connection, that a legendary history of Mogaung in the Myitkyina Dist. mentioned a seal once in the possession of the Shan *Sawbwas* ruling in that area. The seal is said to bear the following words on it: "Seven ranges of mountains, seven seas, the sun, the moon and the stars". It was said to possess magical powers and was strictly guarded. As long as it remained in possession of the reigning *Sawbwa*, the country was immune from foreign attacks. We are reminded of the representation of the same cosmology on Buddhapāda from Pagán and later Buddhist sites in Southeast Asia, where the symbolism is intimately connected with Gautama or Maitreya as Cakravartin.

⁸² Arch *Negs*, 2872-2873 (1926-27); *ASI*, 1926-27, p.179 and Pl.XLIII f; cf. *ASB*, 1949-15, p.26.

⁸³ *Op.cit.*, p.33.

⁸⁴ E.g. *ADM*, t.III, Pl.LXXXVIII.

on the Southeast Asian coins, at least, it would appear to denote the wealth and fertility guaranteed by the issuing king.⁸⁵

Bull

The couchant bull on the obverse of all the Candras coins after Devacandra has usually been described as a Śaivite symbol.⁸⁶ While the early Candras may have favoured this religion, the bull symbol was initially an emblem of royalty and its importance to Indian kingship can be traced to Vedic royal ritual surrounding the sacrificial bull.⁸⁷ The bull is among the most common *lañchana* noticed on royal seals in North and South India and was used by Śaivite, Vaiṣṇavite and Buddhist kings,⁸⁸ often together with other auspicious emblems of royalty: the conch, *cāmara*, sun and moon symbols, *chattra* and *aṅkuśa*. The bull motif was used at Oc-Eo on terracotta sealings, finger rings, and tin plaques together with representations of the king himself.⁸⁹ In Arakan,

⁸⁵ *Elements of Buddhist Iconography* (New Delhi), 1972), pp.77-8.

⁸⁶ Phayre, *op.cit.*, p.28; Johnston, *op.cit.*, p.385.

⁸⁷ Banerjea, *op.cit.*, pp.112-3.

⁸⁸ E.g. The bull is depicted on the seal of the Gunaighar copper-plate of Vainyagupta (*IHQ*, VI, p.46); and on the Rohtasgarh seal matrix of Śaśāṅka (*CII*, III, pp.283-4), and was used by Harṣavardhana (Bāṇa, *Harṣacarita*, tr. Cowell and Thomas, p.198, *EI*, XXI, p.75, *CII*, III, p.231). It was particularly favoured by the ruling families of Orissa and Āndhra, e.g. the Sailodbhavas (*EI*, VI, p.143, *OHRJ*, II, p.6, *EI*, XXXIX, p.3388, XXI, p.34, XIX, p.265), the Bhaumakaras (*EI*, XV, p.1, XXVIII, p.211, *JBORS*, XIV, pp.69, 293, *JAHS*, IV, p.189) and the Gaṅgas of Kalinga (*EI*, XXIII, p.62, XVII, p.307, XIV, p.360, XXV, p.194). The *vṛṣabha-lañchana* was regarded as the insignia *par excellence* of Pallava sovereignty in an inscription in the Vaikunṭha-perumal temple mentioned by G.H. Khare, in *Sources of Medieval History of the Deccan* (in Marathi), I, p.21, cited in Prakash, *Coinage of South India* (Varanasi, 1968), p.38, and was often used on the seals of copper-plate grants, e.g. *EI*, VI, p.84, VIII, p.159, III, p.142, *South Indian Inscriptions*, I, pp.144 ff, II, pp.346, 507 ff, 517.

⁸⁹ B.Ph. Groslier, *Indochina* (Art of the World Series), p.60.

a couchant bull within a lotus is depicted on the seal of the 6th century Candia copper-plate.

Before the time of Devacandra, the bull as a coin device was used almost exclusively by South Indian rulers. The earliest of these may be on the square silver punch-marked Konkan find type.⁹⁰ A standing humped bull, generally facing left, was depicted on the inscribed lead and potin coins of Āndhra feudatories of the Sātavāhanas during the 2nd century A.D.⁹¹ The identical symbol is found on the obverse of the earliest coins definitely attributed to the Pallavas. These are lead coins from the excavations at Kāñcī from strata directly above the Sātavāhana phase.⁹² The lead coins were succeeded by the early Pallava series in copper and bullion, round coins, sometimes inscribed, with a bull, sun and moon above and a beaded surround on the obverse, and various symbols, including the sun-wheel, conch, fish and a double-masted ship on the reverse. This group is mainly found from the sea-shore off Māmallapuram, a famous Pallava port, and from Nellore to Pondicherry on the coast.⁹³ The double-masted ship, a device borrowed from the Sātavāhanas, indicates the importance of sea trade to the Pallavas.

Phayre mentions a number of lead coins from Tenasserim, one of which has a bull on the obverse and some with a "galley" on the reverse which, he considered, were based on these South Indian models.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Allen, *Cat. Ind. Coins in the British Museum*, pp. xviii, 9 and Pl.I, 20.

⁹¹ R.E.M. Wheeler, *op.cit.*, pp.288-92, Pl.CXXVIII 10-18. These were found together with coins having the Southeast Asian *śrīvatsa* prototype.

⁹² *IA - A Review*, 1962-3, p.12 and Pl.XXXIX B.

⁹³ W. Elliot, *Coins of South India*, Pl.1

⁹⁴ *Op.cit.*, pp.38-9.

The technical advance evident in the clarity and fineness of design and finish of early Pallava coins was not continued in later South Indian series, but is comparable to the early Southeast Asian coins.

The tripartite *śrīvatsa* coin from South India, described above (p.148) has a bull on the reverse and possibly belongs to this group. A connected series can be found in the Gurzala hoard from the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. These too have a standing or seated bull within a beaded circle on the obverse. On the reverse is a motif variously described as "a Śiva lingam, flanked by two curved posts within a rayed circle", or as "a trident of Śiva".⁹⁵ The symbol could, however, be seen as a development of the "*triśūla*" type of *śrīvatsa*. The Gurzala coins were attributed to the early Viṣṇukuṇḍin kings of the 5/6th centuries by Subramaniam,⁹⁶ whereas most other scholars assign them to the 4/5th century Pallavas.⁹⁷ In either case, it is clear that these coins, or their immediate prototypes, were the models for the Candra bull/*śrīvatsa* coins of Arakan.

Latter, in his article on "The Symbolical Coins of Arakan", recounted a popular tradition connected with the bull/*śrīvatsa* coins.

There was a king who set off to China to find the skull which he owned in a former state of existence when he was the body of a dog; his astrologers having told him that his skull being wedged into the cleft of a tree was the reason why he was troubled with headaches, and that on removing it he would be cured. On his departure he left his wife with a ring, and told her that in case he should not come back in seven years, she was to raise to the throne, and marry that one of her subjects whom it would fit. On his way back the daughter of the Ocean king who was in love with him, begged her father to raise a storm to drown his fleet,

⁹⁵ Cf. Vidya Prakash, op.cit., pp.41-2.

⁹⁶ A.P. Govmt. Arch. Series, no.8, p.45.

⁹⁷ Vidya Prakash, loc.cit.

and thus procure her lover. This being done, the prime minister who escaped informed the queen of the death of her husband; she immediately gave out throughout her kingdom that he should be her husband whom this ring would fit. Though numbers tried, it was not till an herdsman from the hills with his brother and nephew came down, that it was found to fit anyone. It fitted them all three, the queen married the eldest brother, who thus became king, and he, in commemoration of his origin, put an ox upon his coins, as also the goad (trident), the implement of his craft.⁹⁸

The same story, without the addition of the introduction of the bull coinage, is told in the Arakanese chronicles of King Thala Chanda and his successor, the tribesman Amra Te, who is said to have ascended the throne in 1030 A.D.

The symbols on the coins can now be seen to be of greater significance than was formerly supposed. The obverse bears the dynastic emblem, closely associated with the royal function: the rising sun and *baddhapīṭha* of the Pyus, the conch of the Mons and the royal bull of the Candras of Arakan. The reverse emphasizes that function, with the *śrīvatsa* representing the king in the centre, often with other royal symbols, the *aṅkuśa*, *vajra*, *baddhapīṭha*, *daṇḍa* etc. within and without. Above, the heavens are represented by the sun and the moon, and below are the earth and waters. The power of the king, ensuing from his *abhiṣeka* ceremonies, would unite these to create life and prosperity in the kingdom. Do We, in his *Mahā Rāzawin*, recounts that as part of the coronation ritual of Arakanese kings, 50 coins struck to commemorate the new reign, together with 50 struck in the previous reign, were deposited by the king in the hole dedicated to Vasundharā, the Earth Goddess, within the Mahāmuni Temple enclosure.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ *op cit* pp.238-40

⁹⁹ *ASB*, 1920-21, pp.60-61.

The introduction of a coin currency in Southeast Asia can now be seen as the direct result of trade with South India, and in particular the Āndhra region. The initial impetus for this was the abrupt seizure of the Roman bullion trade after 69 A.D., which led the seafaring kingdoms, principally the Sātavāhanas and the Pallavas, to seek new sources of gold and silver. This is borne out by the lack of silver coins in the South Indian assemblage during this period, and by the use of Roman weight standards and South Indian coin motifs on the earliest Southeast Asian types. The Arakan series evolved directly from Pyu prototypes at the beginning of the 5th century, but soon adopted the bull as the main device, again following a South Indian tradition. The use of northern script on the coins, however, indicates that Indian influence at the court was an extension of the "Brahmanization" of Bengal, already firmly established by the time of Devacandra.

Catalogue Raisonné

We mention here all the coins previously published, and a number of unpublished specimens. The latter complete the collection of the inscribed coins of the first Candara dynasty after Devacandra, provide evidence of a new dynasty in the interregnum between Dhṛticandra and Vajraśakti, and verify the name of one king mentioned on the north face of the Shitt^hyaung pillar inscription. The hoards of coins discovered during excavations in the Comilla area, mostly unpublished, are examined. These provide a concrete link between Arakan and the kingdom of Harikela in Southeast Bengal.

The conch and śrīvatsa coins

(Plate XXXVII, 1-4)

cf. ASI 1926-27, Pl.XLIIIf.)

Refs: Phayre, *op cit* pp.29-30 and Pl.III,9,10,11; Johnston, *op cit*, pp.383-4 and Pl.V,3,4.

This very small series was first described by Phayre, who said that local tradition ascribes them to the ancient kings of Arakan.

Johnston suggested that the Arakan conch-type was connected with the Pegu coins. However, the suggestion of vegetation or flames around the conch on the full size coins, and the peculiar hook at the base of some of the conches may also be compared to the later conch and *baddhapīṭha* coins found at Śrīkṣetra. The *śrīvatsa*, too, while initially taking the "shield" form noticed in the Mon and Pyu coins, evolves into the tripartite *triśūla* shape which was retained throughout the rest of the Arakan series.

1. Refs. Phayre, Pl.II, 11; Johnston, Pl.V, 4.

Silver, diam. 2.5 cm. weight 5 g.

Obverse. Within a beaded border, a stylized conch, with a bead at the top and a hook to the left below. Only a slight suggestion of the upper curved bands to the right. No indication of an aperture. Two ribbon-like projections from either side of the upper bead, reminiscent of the Pegu coins, and below, on either side, four other curved projections, possibly suggesting foliage. Between the beading and below the central figure is an inscription of four characters, read by Johnston as DEVA and, possibly, CANDRA. On his plate, however, DE and VA can be seen on either side of the hook, and CANDRA is not apparent.

Reverse. Within a beaded surround, the "shield" type *śrīvatsa* outline the two upper curves meeting at the centre from which a point protrudes. Within the outline, the base extends into a triangular shape. Five curved stalks or leaves spring from either side; below, three lines suggesting a lotus base. Above, crescent moon to left, sun depicted as a ring, to right, in the manner of the later Pyu coins.

2. Unpublished coin in U Aung Tha Oo's collection.

Silver, diam.? 2.8 cm.

Obverse. Within a circle and beaded surround, the same conch, but more realistically depicted. Traces of an upper bank and aperture at left in the manner of the Pegu coins; no hook below. Above, the wavy lines replaced by three or four dots. From the apex of the shell, two similar protrusions in the manner of the Pegu coins, and five branches or leaves to the left, six to the right. On either side of the elongated base of the conch, above the beading, is a small character. Both are too indistinct to read with certainty.

Reverse. As above; the lotus stem below partially replaced by a row of dots. Above the symbol, outline of a crescent moon to left, the sun, a dot within a circle, to right.

3. A very small coin, some 1.9 cm in diameter, known only from Phraye's indistinct illustration (ibid., no.9).

Obverse. Within a beaded border and a circle, the usual conch, dot at apex and three bands below, no indication of aperture but some decoration below the bands. A few lines below the symbol possibly suggest water or vegetation, but may be read, with some reservation, as  DEVA, in the same script as the later inscribed bull and *śrīvatsa* coins of Devacandra.

Reverse. Within the same beaded border and circle, the usual *śrīvatsa* outline, but with a central vertical shape, between a diamond and a shield, within . This shows an intermediate stage in the evolution of the form of the symbol. Two curved lines spring from either side of the base.

4. Refs. Phayre, ibid., Pl.II, 10; Johnston, op.cit., Pl.V, 3.

Silver, diam. 2.8 cm; condition worn.

Obverse. An outer band of beads enclosed by a circle, within which is another band of beads, surrounding a conch of the no.1 type, but the upper portion not clearly depicted; about eight projections from either side of the shell; no indication of an inscription.

Reverse. Within the same bead band bead border, an evolved tripartite *śrīvatsa* symbol, the central member reaching beyond the outer curves, and having a diamond shape at the apex and the centre. Five branches spring from each side, and an indication of a lotus below. Above, crescent moon to left and sun, depicted as a dot, to right.

This short series, usually described as the "uninscribed" coins of Arakan, is close to contemporary Mon and Pyu coins, and stylistically immediately precedes the bull and *śrīvatsa* series. The variations in the forms of the symbols show that, during the reigns of the earliest Candra kings, the type was still experimental.

The bull and *śrīvatsa* coins

DEVACANDRA

(Plate XXXVIII, 1-2)

Apart from the conch/*śrīvatsa* coins which may have been issued by this king, we have two coins of the bull/*śrīvatsa* type definitely bearing his name. Although Taw Sein Ko reported the existence in the Phayre Coin Cabinet of a coin bearing the name of Kālacandra (*ASI*, 1910-11, p.92), the reading was more probably NĪTICANDRA or PRĪTICANDRA.

1. Refs. Phayre (p.29 and Pl.II, fig.7); Johnston (pp.383-4 and Pl.IV, fig.5). IMC.

The weight is 4.734 gm, and the size approximately the same as the Pegu coins. Rustom noted that if it were a half-denomination, the weight standard would be approximately 9.5 gm, nearly 2 gm heavier than the weight standard of the later coins.

Obverse. Bull facing left, within a circle of beads surrounded by a circle. The bull is not garlanded, but is more realistically executed than those of the later coins, the hump and forequarters being separately delineated. Johnston remarked that this is the only coin in the series where the bull has been placed in the centre of the obverse, leaving insufficient place for the inscription, which appears to have been added as an afterthought. The inscription, in the Nagari

style of 6th century Bengal, reads DEVA, wrongly read by Phayre as DAMA.

Reverse. The tripartite *śrīvatsa* symbol surrounded by a ring of beads enclosed within a circle. The central member of the symbol rises above the outer members, and has a diamond shape in the middle. Leaf-shapes exude from the outer members, although they are not attached in any way. The sun and moon, although indistinct, appear at the top to the left and right of the central member. There are four dots below the symbol.

2. There is no record of the provenance, size or weight of the second coin, a photograph of which was given me by U San Tha Aung.

Obverse. As above, but following DEVA two other letters, probably CANDRA.

Reverse. As above, but to the right of the top of the middle member a small orb within a crescent, as in the conch/*śrīvatsa* coins.

YAJÑACANDRA

(Plate XXXVIII, 3)

No coins of the succeeding king, Yajñacandra, have been published, but a full-size specimen is in the extensive collection of the Sima monastery at Kyauktaw, and is said to have been found in the vicinity of the Mahāmuni temple. Although worn smooth in parts, the coin is in fairly good condition.

Obverse. Seated bull, garlanded, facing left, now within a circle, with a rather ill-formed ring of large beads beyond. The bull is similar to that on the Devacandra coins, the face shown frontally and the legs quite realistically bent beneath the body. The hump is not as pronounced as before. The inscription, well-spaced in the upper third of the coin, reads YAJÑACANDRA in 5/6th century script.

Reverse. Here the symbol attains the form it was to take throughout the rest of the series, with minor variations. The three upper members rise from a base which curves upwards; the middle protuberance, which has lost the central diamond shape seen in the earlier coins, is slightly higher than the outer members. These side pieces are thicker and lack the ornate inward curl noticed before. Single branches, each with five outer leaves fall from the top of each. These branches are no doubt a development from the leaf-like projections which formerly sprang from the outer curves of the symbol. The lotus base is again represented by five dots below. A large crescent moon, with no inner sphere, above left, and the sun, to the right, is a sphere within a circle.

CANDRABANDHU

(Plate XXXVIII, 4)

Unpublished. Provenance, size and weight unrecorded, but has the appearance of a full-size coin. Condition good.

Obverse. Seated bull, facing left, garlanded, within circle. Traces of a row of dots within an outer circle. Apart from the wreath, six (visible) beads from the upper front knee to the outer horn, the type of bull differs little from that on Devacandra's coins. The inscription, which fills almost all the upper half of the coin, is written in two lines CANDRABA in the first, and under BA, (N)DHU, datable to the late 5th century.

Reverse. The tripartite symbol with foliage surmounted by the sun, at left a sphere within a circle, and the crescent moon at right, facing outwards. Seven dots underneath, the whole surrounded by two circles within which there may be beads; these are hardly apparent in the photograph. The centre part of the symbol, the same height as the outer curves, bulges outwards towards the top. The side pieces do not curl inwards as in the earlier coins.

BHŪMICANDRA

(Plate XXXVIII, 5-7)

According to Ānandacandra's *praśasti* (V 26), Bhūmicandra followed Candrabandhu and reigned for seven years. No coins issued by this king have been published, although Charles Duroiselle in *ASB* 1925-26 reported having seen a coin belonging to U San Shwe Bu with the legend Bhisicandra, Bhūticandra or Bhūmocandra. However, U Tin Oo has sent me photographs of three interesting new coins found in Arakan. Unfortunately we have no other data regarding them.

BHŪMI I

(Plate XXXVIII, 7)

From the photograph, which shows coins found in the Myohaung area, this coin appears to be about the quarter or eighth size, and thicker than usual. The condition is fairly good, although there is slight damage around the edges.

Obverse. As above, the garlanded humped bull. Apart from the garland, the bull resembles that on the coins of Devacandra rather than that on those of Candrabandhu, although the latter may be more worn. There are no surrounding beads or circles. The inscription, again squeezed above the bull, is in two lines, BHŪMICA, and below the MI, NDRA. The paleography closely resembles the Bengal style of the late 5th and early 6th centuries.

Reverse. The *śrīvatsa* sign, closer to that on Devacandra's coins than on that of Candrabandhu's. The middle element bulges slightly in the centre, and ends in a point reaching to the top of the coin, sun to right and moon to left. There are five or six dots under the symbol. The foliage issuing from the top of the outer members resembles the Devacandra type rather than that of Candrabandhu.

There is however, a thin stalk from which seven leaf-like shapes project outwards. As with the obverse, surrounding beads and circles are lacking.

BHUMICANDRA 2

(Plate XXXVIII, 5)

This and the following coin are, I believe, in the collection of U Aung Tha Oo of Rangoon.

This appears to be a full-sized coin of the type common to the later kings, in fairly good condition.

Obverse. As in the above coins, although the modelling of the bull has degenerated somewhat, the face being thinner and the forequarters only faintly delineated. Two surrounding circles enclose a border of 22 beads. The inscription, which is well spaced in the upper third of the coin, reads BHŪMICANDRA, datable to the first half of the 6th century.

Reverse. As above, but the central member of the symbol has lost its middle bulge, and only reaches the same height as the side member. The foliage is the same as that of Candrabandhu's coin. Under the symbol are five dots, and within the surrounding circles are 22 beads.

BHŪMICANDRA 3

(Plate XXXVIII, 6)

This coin is the half-size and closely resembles the former in style. It is rather worn, more so on the reverse.

Obverse. As above, but with the bull facing right. The inscription is faint, although BHŪMI can be read with certainty, there may be two following letters, reading CANDRA. 16 beads within the surrounding circles.

Reverse. As above, but with a longer, more elongated central member. No indication of foliage. ?4 dots under the symbol, the outer beads too obscure to count.

The difference in style between 1 and 2 and 3 and their possible variation in weight standard, would suggest that during the short reign of this king the new standard was introduced, constant at least until Dharmmacandra, who ruled at the end of the 7th and beginning of the 8th centuries. We find, too, that the practice of issuing only the first part of the name on the smaller coins was not introduced until the reign of Nīticandra.

BHŪTICANDRA

(Plate XXXVIII, 8)

Ref. Johnston, op.cit., p.385, Pl.V, 7. (BMC), described as a variant form of the Nīticandra coins.

Comparison with the preceding Deva coins and with Bhūmi type I which follows lead us to attribute this specimen to Bhūti rather than Nīti.

Obverse. Bull facing right, rendered in the identical fashion as in the Deva and Bhūmi I coins. The dotted border is absent, as in Bhūmi I, possibly indicating that this is a half size. From Johnston's photograph it appears to be approximately half the size of the Deva coin.

Reverse. The tripartite symbol with extended central protuberance noticed in Deva and Bhūmi I. The foliage does not fall from a stem but protrudes from the outer members, as in some of the preceding, but not in the later coins. Moon to left, sun to right. Traces of a beaded surround.

The relatively poor collection of coins from Devacandra to Bhūticandra indicates not only their greater antiquity but a more limited circulation than the later coins.

NĪTICANDRA

(Plate XXXIX, 1-14)

Refs. Johnston, p.385 and Pl.V, 6, 8, 9 (BMC), 22 (A.S.B.)

The next king, Niticandra, was, it seems, the most powerful of the dynasty. He is described as the remover of strife by policy, and reigned "like Mahendra" for 55 years. His coins are the most numerous in the assemblage, and were issued in all four denominations. The full size, weighing approximately 7.4 gm., 32.5 mm in diameter, is always inscribed NĪTICANDRA; the half and the quarter have NĪTI, and are about 3 gm. and 23 mm diameter, and between 1.9 and 1.3 gm. and 18 mm diameter respectively. The smallest size usually has no inscription, but is recognizable as being issued by Nīti by the style of the symbols. The BMC specimen weighs 0.966 gm, and is 14 mm in diameter. A crescent moon with a sphere above often replaces the inscription.

Few, if any, of the known coins appear to be struck from the same die. There are a number of minor variations within the coins in the rendering of the symbols and in the script. Both Johnston (op.cit.) and Rustom (loc.cit.) have described individual coins in the British Museum and Archaeological Survey collections. We shall therefore consider these and the many coins in the private collections in Myohauing and Rangoon together.

Obverse

The rendition of the bull varies between the realistic Devacandra style and the later more flattened mode. In at least two instances it faces right rather than left (cf. Johnston, p.385, and Pl.V, fig.22) in the full size coins, and often in the smaller denominations. The number of beads within the outer circles is uncertain on most of the coins.

Reverse

As usual. The central member of the symbol is usually elongated above the others; the position of the sun and the moon is often reversed. The outer members in what may be the later coins exhibit a sharp curve inwards, while the branches on either side are gradually confused with the leaves, whose number, however, remains constant at 5 + 5. The number of dots below varies from five to seven. The three smaller sizes have no foliage.

VI RACANDRA

(Pl. XXXIX, 15-19)

Refs. Phayre, p.29 and Pl.II, 8; Johnston, p.385 and Pl.V, 11, 12, 13; (BMC) IMC Cat.

Although the next king, called Viryacandra in the inscription and Vira on the coins, reigned for only three years, he is fairly well represented in the assemblage. He also issued three or possibly four denominations, most of which are close to the late Niti style.

Full sized coins.

The BMC specimen, badly damaged and clipped, weighs 4.898gm.

Obverse

The bull has become more stylized; the body scarcely modelled and the hump a thin projection. The tail protrudes further from the hindquarters. There are 22 beads within the outer circles. The inscription reads VI RACANDRA and is datable to the first half of the 7th century.

Reverse

As in the later Pr̥iticaṇḍra coins. The sun and the moon gain more prominence.

Half and quarter sizesObverse

As above but with VIRA.

Reverse

The foliage around the symbol disappears. There are five or six dots below.

Eighth size

As above with no inscription.

PR̥ITI

(Pl. XL, 1-6)

Refs. Latter, *op cit*, p.239 and pl.III; Fryer, *op cit*, pp.201-2 and figs. 2 & 3; Phayre, *op cit*, p.28 and pl.II, 5-6; Johnston, *op cit*, p.385 and pl.V, 14-15. Viryācandra's successor, Pr̥iticaṇḍra, ruled for twelve years. He is well represented in the collection.

Full size

Two of these coins are known. Phayre published the drawings of a coin first noticed by Latter. Fryer read the inscription Ari-ta-candra with the help of Pratapacandra Ghosh, but the reading is definitely Pr̥iticaṇḍra. Another coin, in better condition, is in U Aung Tha Oo's collection. The catalogue of the White King collection assigns seven of eight coins to Pr̥iticaṇḍra, but owing to unreliability of the descriptions of the coins, it is difficult to say how many are in fact his.

Obverse

The bull in all cases faces left and is garlanded. On U Aung Tha Oo's specimen there are 21 dots beyond the circle.

Reverse

The sun and moon are to the right and left respectively. The lower part of

the outer members becomes elongated, due to the retention of the sharp inner hook in most cases. There are five beads below the symbol. The foliage on either side is again five-branched, the rendition being more stylized.

Half and quarter sizes

The quarter size is the most numerous, 6 being in the British Museum Collection.

Obverse

As above, with PRĪTĪ.

Reverse

As above, but with no foliage. Sun and moon sometimes reversed.

PRTHVĪCANDRA

The next king, named Prthvīcandra in the inscriptions, ruled for 7 years. He is represented by one quarter in the British Museum Collection, weighing 1.695gm., illustrated by Johnston (*op cit* Fl.V, fig.12) and two large unpublished coins, of which U San Tha Aung has sent me photographs.

Full size

(Pl. XL, 7-8)

Obverse

As usual, bull facing left in both cases. By this stage the hump of the bull has become an incongruous lump near the head.

The inscription on the large coins reads PRTHVĪCANDRA, paleographically belonging to the 6th/7th century.

Reverse

As above, however, the foliage does not spring from branches, but from the upper half of the outer members.

Quarter size

(Pl. XL, 9)

As above. The inscription reads PRTHIDHRTICANDRA

(Pl. XL, 10-12)

This last king of the first Candra dynasty reigned for only three years, after which followed a very confused period of Arakanese history.

Three coins issued by Dhrti are known, a full size and a quarter in the British Museum Collection, illustrated by Johnston, and another, unpublished, in the Mrohaung Museum, possibly a half, but no size has been recorded.

The full-sized coin, inscribed DHRTICANDRA is stylistically identical to those of his predecessor. There are five dots below the symbol. The smaller coins are inscribed DHRTI , and also have five dots below.

SURIYACANDRA

(Pl. X L, 13)

According to Anandacandra's *praśasti* (vv. 33-6) the next four kings of Arakan reigned for a total of 49 years, that is, approximately, during the first half of the 7th century. I have shown elsewhere (above , p.44) that Mahāvīra , the first king, probably came from a port on the Bangladesh side of the Naaf estuary. He and the following two kings, whose names indicate their local origins, are each said to have ruled for twelve years, a coincidence not to be taken literally. They were followed by one Dharmaśurā, devout and prosperous, who reigned for the 13 years. A presumably more peaceful era was ushered in by Vajraśakti , a king of royal blood. No coins of these kings are known.

One coin in U Aung Tha Oo's collection obviously belongs to this era, having characteristics of the coins which both precede and follow it.

The inscription reads SŪRIYACANDRA , a name common enough in local tradition, but omitted by Ānandacandra's scribes. Are we to assume that he belongs to the first Candra dynasty, perhaps regaining the throne for a short period after an invasion by Mahāvīra ? If so, he represented a line with strong claims to the kingdom whose presence was best ignored by the succeeding dynasty.

An inscribed pillar from a stūpa traditionally built by a King Sūriyacandra in Vesālī is paleographically dated to the second quarter of the 7th century A.D. (see above p. 98). This date gives our hypothesis of a short resurrection of the Candra dynasty more weight.

The coin is damaged at the top of the obverse side, partially obliterating the first letters of the inscription, and correspondingly at the bottom of the reverse.

Obverse

Bull, garlanded, facing right. The rendition of the body has become quite unrealistic. The head is shown in profile, the hump springs precariously from the back, the legs are thin and elongated, bent below the body in a most uncomfortable position, and the tail has an upward twist. There is a trace of a surrounding circle, but not of beads, although they may once have been present. The inscription is not correctly positioned, the last two letters slanting down at the left of the coin, and may be ascribed paleographically to around the second quarter of the 7th century.

Reverse

The outer members end in pointed hooks, and the inner hook is more pronounced. The central member protrudes, and has a diamond shaped hollow effect in the centre, reminiscent of the Devacandra coins. The dots below are lost.

DHARMMAVIJAYA

(Pl. XL, 15-16)

Vajraśakti was succeeded by Dharmmavijaya, although the relationship between the two is not clear from the inscription. At least seven coins of this king are known. Johnston (*op cit* p.385 and Pl.V fig.19) described a specimen found in Arakan, now in the BMC, unfortunately in bad condition, but with the legend ..RMMAVIJAYA quite clear on the obverse. Similar coins were noticed by Latter and Fryer (p.202, fig.C) and by Phayre (*op cit* p.29 and Pl. II fig.3), who read Varmavijaya. Three identical coins were found during the Mainamatī excavations near Comilla, in strata assignable to the 7th/8th centuries. No clear photographs of these are available and I was unable to inspect them at the Mainamatī Museum. Rashid noted however, that the legend ...RMMAVIJAYA was quite clear in all cases, the common mutilated portion of the legend seemingly caused by a defective die.¹⁰⁰ Another coin, almost half of which is clipped away, is in U Aung Tha Oo's collection , and

¹⁰⁰ Harunar Rashid (*The Early History of Southeast Bengal in the light of recent Archaeological Material* Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Cambridge 1968) describes (p.171) one coin of Dharmmavijaya among 172 coins in hoard III, from a large pot under the brick floor of Cell 13, Period III, Sālban Vihāra, 1956. Other coins from the hoard are the usual Harikela type, except for one coin of Lalitākara (see below, p.181); another Dharmmavijaya coin, also from Period III was discovered in Cell 56 at the same site in 1956, and a third dates from the same period but its provenance is uncertain.

reads DHARMMAVI..... This coin came, I think, from the hoard found at Kywede near Akyab, together with some 10th century coins. The form of all the letters on the Dharmmavijaya coins corresponds to the 7th century style of the Nidhanpur plates of Bhāskaravarman. All the coins found so far are full size. No other coins of Arakanese kings have been found over such a wide area, which would indicate the stability and prosperity of the country during his 36 year reign. The appearance of the coins of this group in a 10th century hoard suggests that after the fall of Ānandacandra, (or his immediate successors) the same currency remained in use until the rise of the Siṅghacandra dynasty in the 9th or 10th century.

Obverse

The bull, facing left and not garlanded, has become quite stylized. Two blobs serve for the head, and the hump is so imperfectly formed that it looks like a hook. The tail curves upwards.

Reverse

The symbols are well-proportioned and carefully executed. The parts of the *śrīvatsa* are thinner than before, although the central projection has a sharp bulge from the mid-point. Eight or nine dots below.

No coins of the next king, Narendravijaya, who ruled for 2 years and 9 months are known.

DHAMMACANDRA

(Pl. XLI, 1)

Coins of this king, who is said to have reigned for 16 years, are well known (e.g. Phayre *op cit* Pl. II, fig. 1; Johnston, *op cit* Pl. V, no 20). Although the inscription gives his name as Dharmmacandra, the coins invariably read Dhammacandra. As was the case with Dharmmavijaya, only

full-size coins are found. The BM specimen, in good condition, weighs 7.6gm. and is 31mm. in diameter.

Obverse

As above, with DHAMMACANDRA in small neat letters.

Reverse

As above; the projecting members of the symbol are thinner, and the central bulge noticed in the coins of Dharmmavijaya is absent. Seven or eight dots below. The foliage no longer has five but seven projecting leaves from either side, some with a round central bulge. Above, full moon within crescent to left, circular sun to right.

ANANDACANDRA (?)

(Pl. XLI, 2)

Unpublished, weight and size not recorded. About a half, worn smooth on both sides.

Another very worn full size coin, found together with the coins of Dharmmavijaya and Śrī Simhgaṇḍacandra in the Kywede hoard, and now in U Aung Tha Oo's collection, obviously belongs to this group.

Obverse

The bull, as depicted on the coins of Dharmmavijaya and Dhammacandra, with a pointed hump, no garland and tail between the legs. Only the letters ... CANDRAH are discernable, but from the spacing and by comparison with the paleography of the West face of the Shitt^hung pillar inscription we may tentatively ascribe it to Ānandacandra. The *viṣarga* after the name is only known on this and the later Śrī Simhgaṇḍacandra coins.

Reverse

As above, with eight small leaves on the outer stem.

ŚRĪ SIMGHAGANḌACANDRA

(Pl. XLI, 3-4)

unpublished

Two coins of this king, now in private collections in Akyab and Rangoon, were found among a hoard of 38 accidentally uncovered near the grazing ground of Kywede village, 14km. west of Akyab on the Kaladan river. The hoard also contained a coin of Dharmmavijaya and the coin we have tentatively assigned to Ānandacandra. Śrī Simghaganḍacandra may be identified with the Śrī Simghaga [ṇḍa] paṭiśuracandra mentioned on 1.9 of the North face of the Shittaung pillar. Although this inscription belongs to the mid-11th century, the name is among the first of a fairly long genealogy. Simghaganḍacandra may, therefore, have reigned early in the 10th century. The coins are in bad condition, both broken or clipped in places. The metal used is inferior to that of the previous coins. Each specimen is about .032m. in diameter, and they appear to have been struck from the same die. The type is close to the coins of Dharmmavijaya, Dhammacandra and the later Harikela group, where the wreath around the neck of the bull is absent.

Obverse

Beaded surround beyond circle. Upper third containing the words ŚRĪ SIMGHAGANḌACANDRA in two lines, in 10th century proto-Bengali script. No attempt has been made to suggest modelling of the bull's body, which is extremely stylized. The ears and horns are mere pointed projections, and the hump, although not the hook noticed in the other coins of the same style, is a surprising lump. The tail does not curve upwards.

Reverse

The śrīvatsa symbol closely resembles the form taken on the coins of Dharmmavijaya. The branch of foliage has 8 projecting fine "leaves", each

with a globular bulge in the centre. 10 dots beneath, crescent moon to left and sun to right.

Bull and śrīvatsa coins minted in East Bengal

Harikela

The next, and largest group of coins bear the same symbols as the usual Candara series, but seem to have originated, not from Arakan, but from Southeast Bengal. From Phayre's first doubtful reading of the legend they are familiarly known as the 'Yarikriya' group.

The provenance and notices of these coins are summarized here:

Arakan

1. Sandoway One coin discovered at Sandoway in 1878 and first noticed by Phayre, *op cit* p.30, Pl.II, 12
2. Theobald Collection Another coin acquired by W.Theobald and recorded by him in *JASB* LXI, pp.102ff in 1892. Find-spot not recorded, but probably Arakan.
3. Shortt Collection One coin in the collection of H.de S.Shortt, mentioned by McDowell in *Numismatic Chronicle*, XX, p.231, fn.3. Findspot not recorded.
4. BMC Apart from no.1, the British Museum possesses a few more specimens of this type, but no published list is available.
5. IMC Eight coins are listed in the Indian Museum's catalogues. Smith, *CCIM*, p.331, Pl.XXXI, 9-11; Suppl. *CCIM* p.99; provenance unknown.

Bengal

6. Mainamati, Comilla 329 coins, including four gold and two copper specimens found during excavation of the Salban Vihāra at strata dating from the 7th and 8th centuries, and recorded by Harunur Rashid in his unpublished Doctoral Thesis, pp.333ff.

7. IMC A few coins in the Indian Museum, originally from a hoard of 63 silver coins recovered from Ānanda Vihāra, a Maināmati site, and mentioned by T.N.Ramacandran in the *B.C.Law Mem. Vol.II*, p.217 and Pl.V.I.
8. BMC 8 'Yarikriya' type silver coins from Sylhet originally from a hoard of 40 coins; the remaining specimens not traceable now, see *Numismatic Chronicle* XX, p.229ff., Pl.V.I.
9. Assam Coin Cabinet One 'Yarikriya' coin in the Provincial Coin Cabinet, Assam; provenance unknown, but probably from Sylhet, according to Rashid, p.345. See A.W.Botham, *Cat.of Prov.Coin Cabinet, Assam*, p.573

As we have seen, the inscription on all these coins reads HARIKELA, the name of the mint or country of issue, and must be equated with the well-known ancient division of Bengal by that name. The script shows a development from the 6th/7th century Arakan style, and reflects changes noticed in the epigraphs of Southeast Bengal in the 7th and 8th centuries. This dating is further substantiated by the context of the coins found during the Maināmati excavations. Rashid noticed that most of these came from strata associated with the early Deva rulers of East Bengal in the 8th century. Coins of Dharmmavijaya (end 7th century), "Imitation Gupta" coins of Bengal (6th/7th centuries) and a silver coin of Śaśāṅka (c.600 - 620) were also found together with the Harikela currency.¹⁰¹

It is obvious from the inscription and the great number of coins found in Bangladesh that they were not minted in Arakan but in Harikela. However, that both countries were in close contact is noticed from the changes in the design of the motifs. Most Harikela coins found in Arakan, but only a few of the Mainamati coins, and one of the Sylhet coins, depicts the bull with a garland around the neck. The last Candara coin to exhibit this feature was the single Sūriyacandra specimen, which, it will be remembered,

¹⁰¹ *ibid*, pp.348 and 354

was the only known coin issued during the confused half-century following the fall of Dhṛticandra. The bull on the Sūriyacandra coin has an upturned tail, unlike the earlier Candra examples but followed by all of the Harikela coins. The hump is out of proportion in both this and the early Harikela types. The reverse symbol on the earlier Harikela coins also follows the Sūriya example; on both, the five leaves from the falling branches are dots joined to the branch with fine stems, and the sun and moon, to the left and right, are a dot within a circle and a wide crescent.

The later Harikela coins may be identified stylistically by the absence of a wreath and by the hook-shaped hump of the bull. Both these features are noticed on the coins of the Arakan kings from Dharmmacandra in the early 8th century. Similarly, the script on the early Harikela coins has peculiarities known only from the late 6th century inscriptions of Arakan, while later developments can be traced in the "bull without wreath" coins. McDowell has noticed that the "bull with wreath" coins were stuck to the weight standard of 7.6gm. used by the main Candra dynasty, while in the later "bull without wreath" coins, the standard dropped to 7.2 to 7.0gm.¹⁰² It would seem therefore that the earliest Harikela coins appeared during the period after the fall of the first Candra dynasty. The inscription on the west face of the Shittaung pillar (v.33) records that after Dhṛticandra, Mahāvīra, king of Purempura, reigned in Arakan for 12 years. If we are to accept the identification of Purempura with present-day Puranpāra, on the west bank of the Naaf river, the traditional border between Arakan and Bengal

¹⁰²

op cit, p.231

(see above, p. 44 fn. 20), it would suppose that the conquering king, most probably a powerful petty chief of an important trading centre, adopted and reissued the coinage of the defeated country. The mint may have initially been at Veśālī, but was soon moved east to the Maināmatī hills, perhaps after the pretender Sūriyacandra gained power, sometime around the middle of the 7th century. The first mention of Harikela is I-tsing's account, where it is defined as the eastern limit of India, in 671 A.D.¹⁰³ It is significant that the Khadga kings, rulers of Southeast Bengal in the second half of the 7th century, had as their dynastic emblem on the seals of their inscriptions a recumbent bull, facing left, in the manner of the Arakan coins and the 6th century copper plate from Veśālī.¹⁰⁴ The Khadga kings were supplanted by the Devas around the beginning of the 8th century.¹⁰⁵ The later group of Harikela coins are definitely associated with these kings, and again reflect the minor changes which occur in the Arakan coins from Dharmmavijaya (fl.c. 665-701). There is not enough evidence to postulate a dynastic connection between the kings of Arakan and Bengal. However, it might be suggested that at the beginning of the 7th century, Arakan was weakened by Pyu incursions and by attacks of the more powerful hill tribes, and the commercial advantage it had over Southeast Bengal diminished. The Khadga kings, taking advantage of this situation, imitated the Candra coinage then current, and possibly imported silver from the same sources. As the price of silver, or the cost of importing it, increased, the weight standard slowly decreased to the 7.0gm. standard of the Deva kings. That the latter had commercial relations with Arakan is attested by the similarity of the motifs and the coins of Dharmmavijaya found

¹⁰³ R.C.Majumdar, *History of Ancient Bengal* (Calcutta, 1971) p.9

¹⁰⁴ For a description of the Khadga epigraphs, see Barrie M. Morrison, *Lalmai - A Cultural Centre of Early Bengal* (Seattle, 1974) pp.99-101

¹⁰⁵ *ibid*, pp.101 - 4

at the Salban Vihāra. The commercial advantage of the Devas was probably strengthened after the fall of Ānandacandra or his immediate successors and the confused state of Arakan and Burma proper in the second half of the 8th century.

Coins of the "Ākara" kings

(Pl. XLI, 11-14)

This series of bull and *śrīvatsa* coins is only known from four coins once in the cabinet of Mr. Prapulla Nath Tagore, recorded by R.D. Banerji in *JASB* Vol. XVI (Numismatic Supplement No. XXXIII, 1920), p. 85, and by two coins found during the Mainamatī excavations. The Tagore coins were purchased together with a "Pegu" conch/*śrīvatsa* coin, and, if originally found together, would indicate that this small hoard reflects the sea-trade in the Bay of Bengal around the 8th century. The inscribed coins may be assigned paleographically to between the mid-8th and mid-9th centuries.

(Pl. XLI, 11)

Ref. Banerji, *ibid* and Pl. XIII, 3; Rashid, *op cit* p. 346.

Obverse

Beaded surround; humped bull, ungarlanded, facing left, long tail twisted under the back legs. Above the inscription LALITĀKARA, not entirely clear in Banerji's illustration, but apparently better in the Mainamatī specimens.

Reverse

The *śrīvatsa* within a beaded border and circle. The form is not clear from the photograph, but the leaves, mere strokes, are attached directly to the sides, and there are five incised dots below.

(Pl. XLI, 12)

Ref. Banerji Pl.XIII, 4.

Obverse

Bull, as above, tail bent behind and three dots below. Banerji read the inscription as RAMYĀKARA, but only ..YĀKARA is visible on the photograph.

Reverse

Not illustrated.

(Pl. XLI, 13)

Ref. Banerji Pl.XIII, 6.

Obverse

The bull, now hardly recognizable, head a smaller blob with five dots, hump at mid-back and not behind head. Banerji read ANTAKARA or ANNĀKARA; only the initial vowel is clear.

Reverse

Not illustrated.

While this group is obviously connected with the later Harikela and Candra coins, their place of origin is not at all certain. Banerji attributed them to a late dynasty of Arakan, while Rashid preferred Bengal. As a compromise, we might suggest the Naaf river area, a well-known commercial centre, too remote to pose a threat to the kings of Mainamatī or Arakan, who were, during this period, too weak to interfere with even a small neighbouring dynasty.

Foreign Coins

No foreign coins dating before the 11th century have been reported found in Arakan, and apart from the Vijayacandra specimens at Mainamatī, no Arakanese coins have been found elsewhere. A number of gold coins issued

by the later Eastern Cālukyas found on Ramree and Cheduba islands, apparently from old shipwrecks, were noticed by Latter¹⁰⁶ and identified by Fleet¹⁰⁷. San Shwe Bu recounted that in Ramree and Cheduba these coins are known as *shwe-tha-bya* and local tradition connects them with the Mahāmuni legend.¹⁰⁸

I have been shown, in Arakan, a number of Indian *padmaṭaṅkas* with a bull on the obverse, which has led some local scholars to connect them with the early bull/*śrīvatsa* coins. These medallions date only from about the 18th or 19th centuries, and identical examples have been described by Sircar in his *Studies of Indian Coins*¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁶ *op cit* Pl. XIII, 6

¹⁰⁷ *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XIX (1890) pp. 80-82.

¹⁰⁸ "About two thousand years ago, during the reign of San-da-thu-roja (Candrasūriyarāja) of Arakan, Gautama Buddha went there from India. The king did worship to the Buddha, being much attracted to his preaching. And when the Buddha was about to return to India, the king and his subjects asked for permission to preserve and worship an image in memory of him. The Buddha assented. And then the king sent out notices to all the Buddhist kings, according to them means for the fashioning of an image of the Buddha. With the contributions that came in, there was fashioned in seven metals, gold, silver, brass, copper etc. an image which is now in Man-dalay. Some of the kings brought their images to Arakan in person. Others started to do so, but did not arrive in time; and so the offerings brought by them were of no use and had to be taken away again. On the way home, some of them happened to come to the island of Man-aung (Cheduba); and finding it uninhabited (and I suppose not wishing to apply to any worldly use articles which, though not actually accepted for a sacred object, had been dedicated to it) - there they buried in the ground the metals which they had taken with them as religious offerings." cf. Appendix I, "The Mahāmuni Tradition" The story differs from the usual account of the making of the Mahāmuni image given in the Arakanese Chronicles, where Candrasūriya merely orders nine *kutis* worth of treasure to be collected. cf Forchhammer, *Arakan*, p. 4

¹⁰⁹ (Delhi 1968) pp. 257-8