

legend can be easily reconstructed. The symbols and legends on the obverse of the Nagama series mentioned above are similar to one another but the symbols on the reverse of these coins are different. The Nagama coins<sup>1</sup> already published have Swastika symbol on its reverse. Coin described above at 2(a) preserves seven spoked wheel inside a circle of dots while coin No. 2 (b), being discussed presently, contains a Triratna on its reverse. As such all these Nagama coins belong to three different varieties :—

3. Coin Bearing Legend *Ajudhe* or *Ajadhe* From Ahichchatra.

Circular ; copper ; diam. 1.2 cm., weight. 1.005 grms. Reg. No. 478.

Obv. Legend *Ajudhe* or *Ajadhe* or *Ajidhe* in the Brahmi of early 2nd century B. C.

Rev. Obliterated.

(Pl. VI. 10)

The Museum possesses two more coins<sup>2</sup> of this type but no symbol is traceable on their reverse. Legend on these coins is fragmentary. Only two alphabets are prominent. The third letter is out of the flan on both the coins. On coin no. 425(a) a standing line, with a dash like line, is visible on either side on the extreme right, while coin no. 640 has nothing as such. On the coin, being described presently, the whole legend is intact from which the legend on the remaining two coins too could easily be reconstructed. The coin under description and coin no. 425(a) are of the same size while coin no. 640 is a bit smaller. These coins differ in weight from each other as shown below.

Coin no. 478, wt. 1.005 grammes ; coin no. 425(a), wt. 1.570 grammes ; coin no. 640, wt. 0.764 grammes.

This shows that they belong to three different weight standards.

Legend on the coin may be read as अजिधे, (*Ajidhe*) or अजधे (*Ajadhe*) which has never been noticed earlier. This legend is inexplicable due to the absence of any symbol on the coin. The letters of the legend, when read together sound it to be the name of the city of Ayodhya but no definite conclusion could be arrived at in the absence of a more reliable evidence. However, the coin is rare if not unique.

1. *JNSI*, XXIV, p. 23, coin No. 7.  
2. Museum Register nos. 425(a) and 640.

4. Coin of Mahārāja Sri Deva

Round ; Copper. diam 1.1 cm ; weight 1.170 grms. Register No. 552.

Obv. Circular legend *Mahārāja Sri Deva* in the script of about 4th century A. D.

Rev. Eight spoked wheel inside a circle of dots.

(Pl. VI. 11)

One coin of this Nāga ruler has been published by V. A. Smith.<sup>3</sup> The legend on his coin is highly damaged and only *Sri* is legible while the present coin is well preserved and the legend *Mahārāja Sri Deva* is in a good condition. But it has no space for the inclusion of *Nāgasya* on it. Only one coin of this ruler was known to Smith.

R. R. TRIPATHI

7.

RHINOCEROS-SLAYER TYPE COINS OF KUMĀRAGUPTA I

A few gold coins of the Gupta emperor Kumāragupta I (413–55 A.D.), belonging to the Rhinoceros-slayer type, have been discovered, and the question whether these coins have any bearing on the extent of Kumāragupta's empire has been discussed by scholars. M. M. Nagar observed, "The portrayal of rhinoceros..... is very important as it suggests that nearly 1500 years ago this animal was frequently met with in Āryāvarta, although it has since become entirely extinct from here. Or alternatively it may suggest that Assam (ancient Kāmarūpa), the marshy jungles of which are even today the abode of rhinoceroses, was included in the vast empire of Kumāragupta I and that sometime during his lifetime the king had visited the place and hunted there these wild and hefty animals. The latter view, however, appears more plausible, as it is supported by similar coin types of other Imperial Gupta emperors, the Tiger-slayer type of Samudragupta marking his conquest of East Bengal and Assam (Samatāṭa-Davāka-Kāmarūpa) areas, where alone the tigers are found, and the lion-slayer type of Candragupta II commemorating his conquest of Kathiawar, the only place where lions are found in India."<sup>4</sup>

1. *IMC*, p. 178.

2. *JNSI*, XI, Part I, 1949, p. 8. There are other speculations of this nature in Nagar's article: "We know from other sources that Kumāragupta I inherited a vast empire from his father Chandragupta II which included both Kathiawar and Assam, and it is very probable that he might have visited both these parts of his empire, hunted lions and rhinoceroses and perpetuated these exploits on his coins."

Unfortunately Nagar indulged in the above speculations without caring to examine the question whether ancient and medieval Indian literature and the works of foreign travellers speak of the existence of the rhinoceros, tiger and lion in areas other than those where they flourish today. Indeed a study of such sources, which would have sapped the foundation of Nagar's theory, was not undertaken by any one. On the other hand, P. J. Chinmulgund offered unqualified support to Nagar's views when he declared, "Nagar seems to be right in his conclusion that Kumāragupta's empire included Assam and that the king might have hunted the rhinoceros there. We know that, except towards the end of his reign Kumāragupta's rule was peaceful and prosperous and the king might have visited different parts of his vast empire and hunted tigers in Bengal, lions in Kathiawar (Saurāṣṭra) and the rhinoceros in Assam; and quite appropriately these exploits were commemorated on his coinage."<sup>1</sup>

S. V. Sohoni, however, rightly drew attention to the views of S. H. Prater on the distribution of the rhinoceros in India, and this latter authority says, "Formerly extensively distributed in the Indian Peninsula. Today it is restricted to parts of Nepal and Assam. In Nepal, it is found only in the country to the east of the Gandak river, known as Chaitwan, in Assam in isolated areas of the plains."<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, the word 'formerly' in the passage quoted from Prater does not make it clear whether the rhinoceros was 'extensively distributed in the Indian Peninsula' before or even after the age of the Imperial Guptas (from the 4th to the 6th century A. D.). That is why even Sohoni could not free himself completely from the influence of Nagar's speculation. He said, "It is not necessary to hold that Kumāragupta I had to go to Kāmarūpa to hunt a big one-horned rhinoceros..... It is more probable that Kumāragupta I's hunt of rhinoceros took place in North Bihar jungles adjoining the Chaitwan region in Nepal, not far away from Vaiśālī, than in distant Assam. A ruler of Pāṭalipatra would have found this more convenient."<sup>3</sup>

Sohoni further observed, "It could be safely assumed on account of this variety's extensive distribution in North India centuries ago, that Kumāragupta I could have hunted a big one-horned rhinoceros much nearer home than in Assam"<sup>4</sup>

1. Ibid, XVII, Part II, 1955, pp. 105-06
2. Ibid, XVIII, Part II, 1956, p. 179; Prater, *The Book of Indian Animals*, pp. 191 ff. In stead of 'Rhinoceros-slayer'; Sohoni calls the type *khadga-trāṭā* (Rhinoceros-saviour).
3. *JNSI*, XVIII, Part II, p. 179.
4. Loc. cit.

But, if the rhinoceros flourished in early times in the valley of the Ganges on which the Gupta capital stood, how can it be possible to determine the exact spot where Kumāragupta I might have encountered a rhinoceros?

There is evidence to show that the rhinoceros flourished in the Ganges valley<sup>1</sup> at least as late as the 11th century A.D. The celebrated Muslim savant Abu Rihan Al-Bīrūnī, who wrote his *Kitābul Hind* in 1030 A. D., says, "The *ganḍa* exists in large numbers in India, more particularly about the Ganges. It is of the build of a buffalo, has a black scaly skin, and develops hanging dewlaps down under the chin. It has three yellow hoofs on each foot, the biggest one forward, the others on both sides. The tail is not long; the eyes lie low, further down the cheek than is the case with all other animals. On the top of the nose there is a single horn which is bent upwards. The Brāhmaṇas have the privilege of eating the flesh of the *ganḍa*". I have myself witnessed how an elephant coming across a young *ganḍa* was attacked by it. The *ganḍa* wounded with its horn a forefoot of the elephant, and threw it down on its face."<sup>2</sup>

D. C. SIRCAR

## 8

## GADHIA COINS FROM HARSUD

One thousand two hundred and twenty six silver coins found in village Kotha of Tahsil Harsud, District East Nimar, Madhya Pradesh, were received for examination in the office of the Deputy Director of Archaeology and Museums (Museum Branch), Madhya Pradesh, Raipur from the Sub-Divisional Officer of Harsud in March 1966. On Examination, it has been found that the coins are the so called Gadhia Coins. They are described below:—

**Obverse :** Almost all the coins have an unrecognised head of the king surrounded by many meaningless dots and a few lines on either sides

1. The Rhinoceros-slayer type has been discussed also by Shri Jia Prakash in *JNSI* XXIV, pp. 152ff and XXV, Pt. I, pp. 29ff. The rhino is still found in the Nepalese Terai—*Editor*.
2. The flesh of the rhinoceros is prescribed as the proper Aryan food by Baudhāyana (I. 12-5), Manu (V. 18), Gautama (17-27), Apastamba (I. 17-37), Viṣṇu (51.6, 26, 27), etc., though Vasiṣṭha (14. 39, 40, 44, 47) says that there are conflicting opinions regarding the flesh of the wild boar and rhinoceros. See G. N. Gha, *Manusmṛti Notes*, Part III, pp. 365-66.
3. Sachau *Alberuni's India*, Part I, pp. 203-04.