

INFORMATION SHEET NO. 11THE SILVER COINAGE OF THE DOGRA MAHARAJAHS OF JAMMU AND KASHMIRBY N.G. RHODES AND K.W. WIGGINSINTRODUCTION

The territory of Kashmir is in the Himalaya area north of the Punjab. The region is entirely mountainous, the main valley, in which lies the capital Srinagar, being some 5,200 feet above sea level. This former state was 80,900 square miles in extent, with a population in 1891 of about 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ million, of whom 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ million were Muslims. The impressive mountain scenery, beautiful alpine lakes and the generally temperate climate combine to make Kashmir one of the more favoured parts of India.

Up to the 14th century A.D. Kashmir was ruled by a series of Buddhist and Hindu dynasties although Mahmud of Ghazni made frequent raids into the valley. In 1305 A.D. Kashmir was conquered by Tibetan invaders who, being soon converted to Islam, began a dynasty known as the Sultans of Kashmir. In 1559 A.D. power was assumed by Ghazi Khan Chak, a Hindu. His line lasted just 27 years until the country was taken over by the Mughal Akbar in 1586/7. Nadir Shah, the Persian, invaded India and took Delhi in 1738 A.D. including Kashmir and the surrounding country in his conquests. He seems never to have physically taken possession of the area and it remained nominally under the administration of the tottering Mughal Empire. On the death of Nadir Shah, one, Ahmad Shah Abdali seized what is now Afghanistan and in 1752 A.D. invaded Kashmir, adding it to the Durrani Empire which now stretched from the Indian Ocean to the Himalayas. The Durranis ruled Kashmir through a series of Afghan governors. By the beginning of the 19th century however, the Durrani Empire was crumbling and their last governor was defeated in 1819 A.D. by the Sikhs, who, under Ranjit Singh, were expanding their empire from the Punjab. Until 1846 A.D. Kashmir was ruled by governors appointed by the Maharajahs of the Punjab.

The district of Ladakh was in the east of the Maharajah's territory and bordered Tibet, of which it was a dependency until the 17th century. It then became an outlying province of the Mughal Empire until it was annexed by the Durranis in 1752. With the Sikh conquest of Kashmir in 1819, Afghan control of Ladakh, which had never been more than nominal, ceased. The Sikhs made no attempt to occupy Ladakh and in 1834, Gulab Singh the Rajah of Jammu, sent an army to Ladakh. Although this first expedition was successful it was only in 1840 that Gulab Singh's control over Ladakh became undisputed and in 1846 this area became a province of his new domain.

It is appropriate here to give an account of the rise of one of the most remarkable Indian personalities of the 19th century and the future Maharajah of Jammu and Kashmir. Gulab Singh was the great grand nephew of Ranjit Deo, the ruler of Jammu in the mid 18th century. His family had fallen on relatively hard times and he joined the Sikh court in 1809 A.D. at the age of 17 as an adventurer. He quickly showed his prowess on the field of battle and in diplomacy, and in 1820 he was successful in putting down an insurrection in Jammu, which the Sikhs had annexed in 1808. In recognition of his services he was granted the title of Rajah of Jammu and in 1823 was granted Jammu as an hereditary possession. The death of Ranjit Singh in 1839 heralded the end for the Sikh Empire. Intrigue and murder were the order of the day. Although Gulab Singh still professed allegiance to the Sikh ruler, he tried to steer clear of the deadly environment of Sikh politics. His power, wealth and wisdom ensured that he commanded the respect and envy of the Sikh court.

Late in 1845 war broke out between the Sikhs and the British. After the defeat of the Sikh armies in several large scale engagements the British forces occupied Lahore in February, 1846. Gulab Singh, watching events from distant Jammu, took no part in the conflict, but at the close of hostilities he appeared on the scene in the role of mediator between the British and the Sikhs. Under the negotiations, the Sikh Maharajah had to forfeit lands and pay war indemnities. As his treasury was low he offered to cede all his hill country from the Bias to the Indus Rivers including the territories of Jammu and Kashmir, to the British in lieu of cash. The British declined the offer as, at that time, it would have been virtually impossible for them to control these former Sikh lands. Gulab Singh, being on the spot whilst negotiations were continuing, must have viewed the future with some apprehension. He therefore proposed that he should pay the war indemnities on behalf of the Sikhs if he were constituted independent ruler of Jammu and Kashmir. This arrangement probably suited the British very well and as a result a treaty was concluded with Gulab Singh at Amritsar on the 16th March, 1846, by which he was recognised as the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir. He agreed to acknowledge the supremacy of the British Government and undertook to pay an annual token tribute of one horse, twelve perfect shawl goats and three pairs of Kashmir shawls.

From the date of the Treaty of Amritsar the existence of Jammu and Kashmir as an independent state commences. Gulab Singh had control of a tremendous area including Ladakh and later Gilgit and Baltistan together with other border areas. The last Sikh governor of Kashmir resisted the takeover for some time and it was only in November, 1846 that Gulab Singh was able to enter Srinagar, its capital. Maharajah Gulab Singh, a good friend of the British, ruled wisely and well. He respected the terms of the treaty and took no part against the British during the Second Sikh War of 1848-49. He died on the 4th August, 1857, being succeeded by his son, Ranbir Singh, who rendered signal service to the British during the Indian Mutiny. Ranbir died on the 12th September, 1885. His son, Pratap Singh, followed him and after a reign of 40 years died in 1925. His nephew, Sir Hari Singh Bahadur, succeeded him but went into exile in 1949, Yavaraj Karan Singh acting as regent until 1952 when the hereditary monarchy was abolished.

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DESCRIPTION OF COINAGE

The copper coins of Kashmir have been thoroughly dealt with by Valentine who recorded and illustrated most known types. Little attention has however been paid to the silver coinage that was struck by the Sikhs in Kashmir or that of their successors, the Dogra Maharajahs. Rodgers mentions briefly some Sikh rupees struck in Kashmir but it would appear that no detailed account has ever been given of the silver coins struck by Gulab Singh and his heirs during the 19th century, in spite of the fact that most of the coins are fairly common.

In this paper the authors have attempted to record the various types of silver coin and the denominations struck at Srinagar from 1846. The sole sources of information have been the British Museum collection and specimens that exist in their own, and a few other, collections.

TYPE I

Gulab Singh occupied Srinagar in Kashmir in November, 1846 (S.1903). He lost no time in issuing money for his first coins bear this date. Rupees dated S.1903 were also struck in Srinagar by the Sikhs (Type A) and were called "Hari Singh" after Hari Singh, Sikh Governor of Kashmir from 1820 to 1822. The term was probably applied also to the later rupees of Types I and II. The Hari Singh rupee was equivalent to eight British-Indian annas. Gulab Singh followed the general style of this coinage retaining on the obverse the pipal leaf, which was apparently a national emblem of the Sikhs, but changing the mint name from 'Kashmir' to 'Srinagar'. Gulab Singh was a Hindu, not a follower of the Sikh religion, and although he followed the Sikh tradition in not having the ruler's name on his coins the inscription refers to the Hindu god Shiva and the mythological hero Ram, instead of the Sikh Guru, Govind Singh. Coins of this type were produced for a few years only. A peculiar feature of some pieces of both dates is the omission of the dot representing the persian 0 in the figures of the date ; probably an error on the part of the die cutter .

Fractions of the rupee are scarce and as with most Indian coinages appear to have been struck from the rupee dies. Because of this only part of the legend is visible although a conscious attempt has been made to include the pipal leaf. One noticeable mark on the reverse of the S.1904 rupee is a five pointed star, replacing four small dots which occur in an identical position on the S.1903 coin. The significance of the star is not known but it does not appear on the fractional pieces.

TYPE II

In S.1905 (1848 A.D.), although the legends remain the same, some changes appear. On the obverse, below the pipal leaf, a sword (tulwar) pointing left and suspended by a sling has been added. On the reverse side, the star of the Type I rupee has been replaced by a trident upon a two petalled stem. These coins seem to be produced from better engraved dies than the previous type, although in the half rupee the die cutter has again omitted the persian 0 from the date. Coins of this type are possibly the most uncommon of the series. Only a few rupees and one half rupee have been found for examination.

TYPE III

No Type II coins are known for S.1907 (1850 A.D.) but a new type emerges in this year known as the "Chilki " rupee . Against the British-Indian rupee standard its value varied from 8 to 10 annas but the meaning of the name has not been determined. It has a redesigned obverse; the pipal leaf being considerably reduced in size and placed on an upright stem, the sword and sling moved to a position above the leaf and, inserted in the centre of the field are the letters J H S.

TYPE III (Continued)

On coins dated S.1907 to S.1915 a small cross is evident above these letters. It does not appear on coins dated S.1916 or subsequently.

Two explanations are known for the inclusion of these letters on coins of Kashmir. It is said that Lord Lawrence, when at the court of Gulab Singh, was asked by the Maharajah to what the success and prosperity of England was due. His Lordship replied that it was due to its being a Christian nation. The Maharajah then asked him for some symbol or sign of Christianity, whereupon Lord Lawrence wrote the letters J H S (Jesus Hominum Salvator). Sir John Lawrence was Commissioner of the Punjab from 1849 until 1857. He was not raised to the peerage until after he had left India. During his term of office in the Punjab he probably had a number of meetings with Gulab Singh but whether the incident as related took place cannot be confirmed.

The second explanation is given by General G.G. Pearse, C.B., R.A., who has written: "Whilst Lord William Bentinck was Governor-General of India, 1828 - 1835, two very remarkable conversions to Christianity took place; one was of a celebrated Muhammadan Moulvie, the other of an equally celebrated Brahmin, by name Anund. These men were great controversialists, and their change of religion caused much stir and excitement. Anund died, leaving a son, Anund Messiah, a sharp intelligent man, good looking and full of energy, a very stormy petrel of a Christian, never so happy as when launching his Christian controversial arguments at the heads of the Hindoos. In 1850 Anund Messiah was at the Court of Maharajah Goolab Sing, of Cashmere. In the spring of 1851 when I was Assistant-Commissioner of Hazara on the Cashmere frontier, Anund Messiah, who was passing through Hazara, came to pay his respects to me. I saw a good deal of him for a few days. With much delight he showed me the new Cashmere rupees of Goolab Sing, with the Roman letters J.H.S. conspicuously in the centre of the coins amidst the Persian. He said that he had induced the wily, clever Dogra King to place these letters on his coins, assuring him that thereby he would please the British Indian Government and would himself be favoured by fortune....". Both of these accounts may well be true, with Lawrence himself demonstrating the letters as a symbol of Christianity and Anund Messiah, probably after some discourse on religious matters, persuading the Maharajah to have them put on his coins. In spite of the inclusion of a well known sign of Christianity on these coins, the obverse and reverse legends remain the same and refer to Hindu deities.

The fractions of the rupee are much scarcer than the principal denomination and appear to have been struck, as and when a supply was required, from the rupee dies.

TYPE IV

In the year S.1927 (1870 A.D.) the type of coin was changed drastically. The sword and sling disappeared entirely and the pipal leaf was reduced to smaller proportions. The Persian legend was altered to refer to the Hindu god Raghunath, and the Roman letters were changed to read I H S. This latter modification is interesting, for these letters represent the Greek letters I.H.C. (the C being a form of the Greek Σ), which form the first three letters of the name Jesus. It is said that they are often misread as standing for Jesus Hominum Salvator (See under Type III). It may be that the Kashmir authorities were advised as to this point and made the change accordingly. However, an examination of the coins shows that the letters reverted to J.H.S during S.1929, both varieties being known for that date. On the reverse, the Persian script was replaced by Dogri script with the same meaning. Above this is a floral design and below a sword pointing to the left.

TYPE IV (Continued)

This type of rupee weighs 4 grammes less than the previous type, Although not yet assayed, it would appear that Type III coins contain a fair proportion of base metal, whereas the new rupees are of fine silver. Hence both types could have had the same intrinsic value. The earliest pieces of this type were well struck from finely engraved dies. Until some time in S.1929 the coins were struck in a collar, but this process was then abandoned and subsequent coins of this type were produced on open flans, consequently the last figures of the date are frequently off the flan on both obverse and reverse. The improvement in the fineness of the metal, the improved minting techniques and the redesign of the coinage indicate a serious attempt at a reformation of the currency in Kashmir. This may have been set in train by the Maharajah or it may have been that the British Government felt that the Kashmir coinage was below acceptable standards for a local currency.

No denominations smaller than the rupee have been encountered in this type.

TYPE V

No explanation can be suggested for the existence of this type, which is represented by a solitary specimen in the British Museum. The date S.1929 falls in the middle of the period of the Type IV coinage. It is a well struck coin with neat and accurate script in the legends. This and the general style of the Persian lettering suggests that the die was produced by a skilled craftsman possibly in another part of India. Until a better explanation is forthcoming this coin might be classed as a pattern or trial piece, possibly produced for the recoinage that took place in S.1927 or struck for some special occasion as a "nazr" coin. It will be noted that the word Sri precedes both obverse and reverse legends.

TYPE VI

This last type is perhaps the most common. Known dates range from S.1933 (1876 A.D.) to S.1952 (1895 A.D.), when the production of local coins ceased in Kashmir and the British Indian currency became the principal medium of exchange. The obverse is similar to Type IV but the date is now mingled with the Persian characters, the pipal leaf has been enlarged and the Roman letters have reverted to J H S. On the reverse, the date has been repositioned in the centre line. Various small marks such as the star, trident and leaves appear in the obverse field. These may have some significance or may just have been inserted by the die cutter to fill in obvious spaces. Compared with Type IV, this issue is a somewhat inferior product. Both the Persian and Dogri legends are poorly engraved and the figures in the dates show variations of the same numeral on different coins. In some instances coins bear different dates on each side. During the course of this type the $\frac{1}{2}$ rupee was again produced but probably in negligible numbers as only one specimen has come to light. No evidence has been found that the Type VI rupees were known as Hari Singhi rupees as Valentine implies, or that the letters J H S are an abbreviation of Jamu Hari Singh. It is suggested that this explanation was put about to avoid the offence to the Hindu and Muslim populace of having a Christian symbol in a prominent place on the State coins. This particular type appears to have been known as the "Kham rupee", possibly from the Hindi meaning crude, raw or unfinished. They were valued at exactly half the British-Indian rupee, although a slight decrease in weight has been noted from S.1934 onwards.

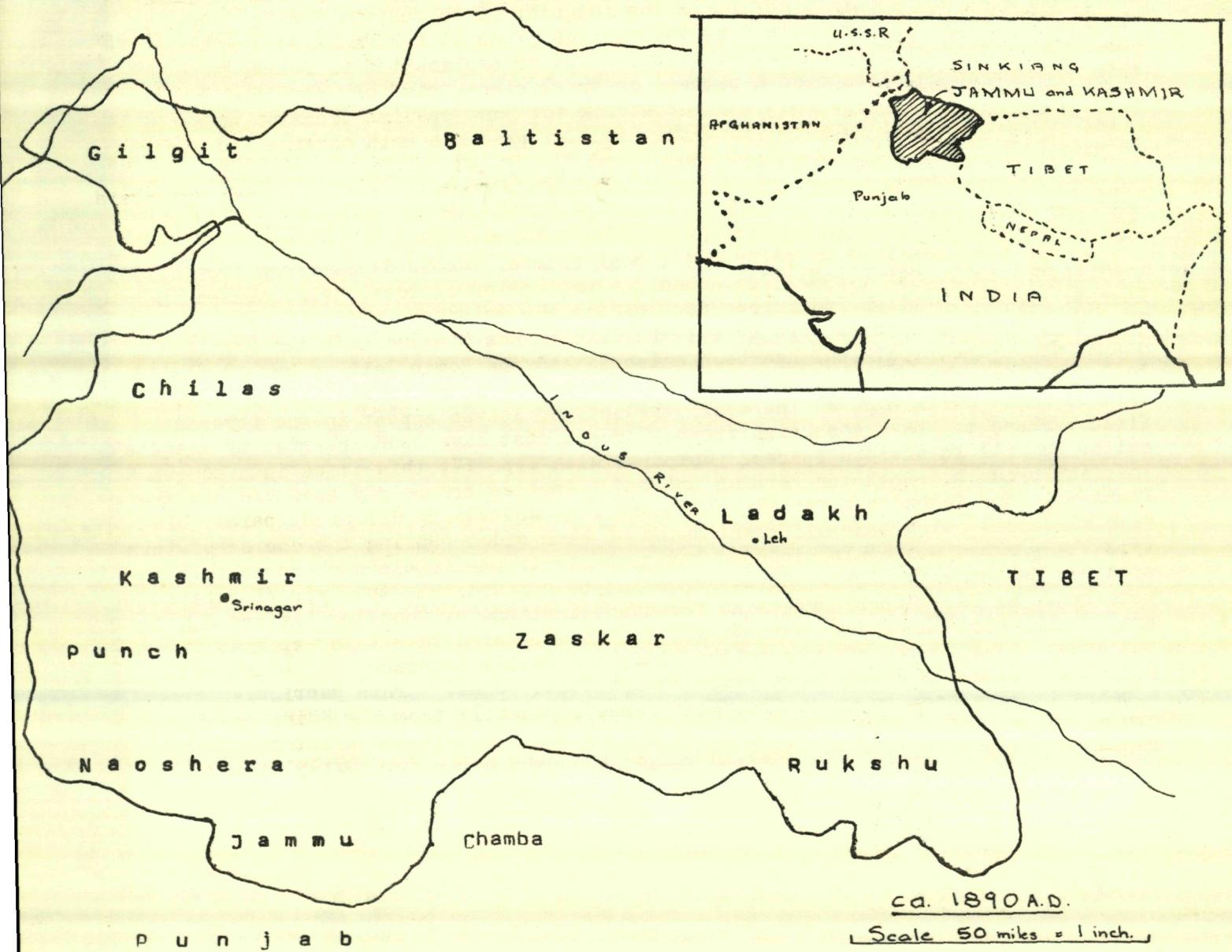
The coinage of Ladakh has previously been fully dealt with by Panish. Two coins, however, which are pertinent to the title of this paper, are described and illustrated here.

TYPE I A

Whether Gulab Singh had any authority from his Sikh overlord to strike coins before 1846 is doubtful. This type, however, bears his name and the fact that the title Raja was used instead of Maharajah may point to this period. It is undated and was probably struck as a type over a number of years. The denomination is not known but the local name was Jud or Jao and it was equal to 4 annas. The obverse gives the title and name of Gulab Singh in rather crude Nagari. The reverse shows a hand dagger (katar) pointing right and surrounded by some very debased Persian script, which on an earlier type of coin has been read as Zarb-i-Bhotan; the inhabitants of Ladakh being known as Bhots and their country called Bhotan.

TYPE II A

One further type of coin for use in Ladakh was issued during the reign of Ranbir Singh. This is an unusual piece in that the legends are in Persian and Tibetan. It is dated S.1928 (1871 A.D.) and may have been issued as a result of the recoinage that occurred in the Maharajah's territory in S.1927 (1870 A.D.) Presumably the Type I A coins were still in use and may have been issued until this date.



LEGENDS

OBVERSE LEGENDS

REVERSE LEGENDS

No. 1.

سر پیرا مچ
سہا
سری نگر
ضرب

Sri Ram Ji
Saha'i
Srinagar
Zarb

No. 2

سر
شیر نا
سہا

Sri
Shivanath Ji
Saha'i

No. 3

رکھنا
ضرب سر نگر

Raghanath Ji Saha'i
Zarb Srinagar

No. 4

१७३४
७३७१
३७१

Raghanatha Ji
Saha Jarava Sri
nagara

No. 5

سر
رگنا
ضرب سری نگر

Sri
Raganath Ji Saha'i
Zarb Srinagar i

No. 6

११५३
४३३
३३३

Sri Raghana
tha Ji Sahaya
Jarava Srinaga
ra Sa

No. 7

१७३४
५३
११३

Raghanatha Ji
Saha Ja
rava Srinagara

No. 8

५३
गुलब
सिंह

Raja
Gulab
Singh

No. 9

بتان
ضرب

Butan
Zarb

No. 10

لراکھ
ضرب
قلیم و جمون
سندھ

Ladakh
Zarb
(I)qlim Wa Jamun
Sanah

No. 11

१९२८
२९
२

1928
Jambui
par

CATALOGUE OF COINS

All coins are of silver. Dates relate to the Samvat Era.

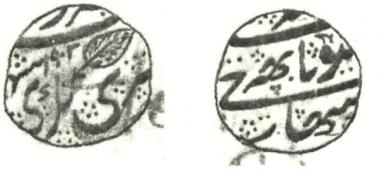
Type	Legend		Denomination	Weight grams	Diameter mm	Notes.
	Obv.	Rev.				
I	1	2	rupee	c 10.8	20 - 21	Dated 1903, 193 1904 and 194
			$\frac{1}{2}$ rupee	c 5.4	16 - 17	Dated 1903, 1904 & 194
			$\frac{1}{4}$ rupee	c 2.7	14	Ditto
			$\frac{1}{8}$ rupee	c 1.3	13	Dated 194 1903
II	1	2	rupee	c 10.8	21	Dated 1905, 1906
			$\frac{1}{2}$ rupee	c 5.4	18	Dated 195 1906
III	1	2	rupee	10.8-10.3	20	Dated 1907-1927 inclusive A variety of 1910 has the date above J.H.S.
			$\frac{1}{2}$ rupee	c 5.4	17	Known dated 1914 (probably with + over J.H.S.), 191x with no + and hence c.1916-19, and ? 1922 with a blundered 3rd figure.
			$\frac{1}{4}$ rupee	c 2.7	15	Known for 19xx with a + (hence before 1916), 1922 with blundered date and 1925.
			$\frac{1}{8}$ rupee	c 1.3	11	Dated 1925
IV	3	4	rupee	c 6.8	22	Dated 1927-1932. In 1929 the use of a collar was abandoned and 2 types exist for this year.
V	5	6	rupee	c 6.8	22	Known for 1929 only.
VI	3	7	rupee	c 6.8 dropping to c 6.6 after 1933	19	Dated 1933-1952 (1938 & 1940 excluded). The 1943 coin is dated 1932 on the obverse
			$\frac{1}{2}$ rupee	3.3	16	Known for 1950 only.
IA	8	9	Jud or Jao	28-34 grains	c 21	Undated. Varieties exist.
IIA	10	11		28-32 grains	21	Known for 1928 only.



A



V



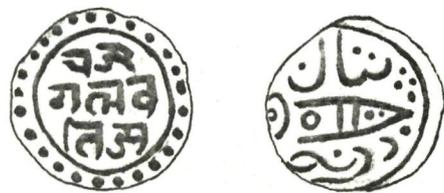
I



VI



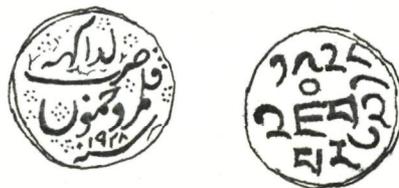
II



IA



III



IV

IIA