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THE "RÁMA-TÁNKAS"

OR THE CORONATION MEDALS OF THE KINGS OF VIJÁYANÁGARA,
THE MODERN BIJÁNAGAR IN SOUTHERN INDIA.

I

INTRODUCTION

It may seem rash to invite the attention of the XIIth International Congress of Orientalists, where the store of learning slowly and silently accumulated for years is being brought to light, to such a trivial topic as the coronation medals of the Kings of Vijáyanágar. But as a wearied brain finds relief in diversion, this unpretending little monograph may perhaps serve to ease the strain of deep and abstruse studies and then lead this august assembly to weigh calmly and dispassionately many a complex problem still agitating the world and awaiting solution in the vast domain of Orientalism.

The cup-shaped gold medals of Southern India are valuable relics of a grand past. They are documents, moreover, of a mighty religious influence in a mediaeval kingdom, whose the capital was not only the seat of

profound Bráhmancial culture but also a great centre of trade.

It was at Vijáyanágara, when at the zenith of its greatness, that Mádhava, surnamed Vidyáranya or forest of knowledge, his brother Sáyana, and many other scholars endeavoured, more than a century before Western Christendom was convulsed with the fierce struggle which brought about the Reformation, to establish a bond between religion and science, thus contributing to the adjustment of the antithesis which still exists between the two highest spheres open to the intellect of man.

It was here that Mádhava wrote his commentary on the Rig-Veda and numerous works on philosophy, law and ethics, in which he sought to adjust the emotional with the intellectual on a spiritual basis for the evolution of the race. He guided with wisdom the destinies of a prosperous reign and of a peaceful, frugal and contented people, and lastly retired at the fourth *áshrama* or stage of life from the noise and rush of the world to end his days as an anchorite in meditation, fasting and prayer.

During the active period of his existence, Mádhava acted both as minister and as religious preceptor to his King, and is hence called Mádhavácharya, *ácharya* meaning a preceptor. His royal pupil, Bukkarája, of the ancient lunar lineage of the Yádavas, who had their capital at Devagiri, now Daulatabad, was devoted to him in life and to his memory after death.

While still engaged in writing his treatises on religion and philosophy, Mádhava headed an expedition to Goa which was besieged by a foreign foe, whom the



official documents of the time name Turukshas, that is Mahomedans. He succeeded in driving them out of the country and in re-establishing the sacred shrine of Saptakoṭīśvara and others which had been want, only destroyed by the iconoclastic invaders. (See my paper on the temple of Saptakoṭīśvara in the *Indian Antiquary*, vol. III, 1873).

Finally, Mádhava framed a code for the administration of those admirable rural communities which had existed in that part of India from time immemorial, and made to various religious bodies, on special occasions such as eclipses, grants of villages, the texts of such grants being engraved on copper plates to ensure their lasting "as long as the sun and the moon endure."

Such were, in short, the life, works and influence of this strong and attractive personality. Since his death, Mádhava became a tradition in the country, receiving and retaining those constant embellishments of feature and enrichment of detail which are the mark of a real tradition, not unlike those of a St. Francis of Assisi at La Verna and of a St. John Gualberto at Vallombrosa.

Mádhava's copper plates are still extant, and I had the honour of showing one at the pretty little Exhibition held in connection with the IVth. International Congress of Orientalists of Florence in 1878.

Twenty-one years have elapsed since then, which is, indeed, a long period, *Grande mortalis aevi spatium*, as says Tacitus. During these years many noble and learned Orientalists whom I had the privilege of meeting in Florence have ceased to live. Michele Amari,

Ernest Renan, Theodor Benfey, François Lenormant and many others have passed away leaving behind "Foot-prints on the sand of time."

The memory of my amiable host, Ernesto Rossi, is dear to me. Ubaldino Peruzzi, the then Syndic of Florence, with his striking personality, his intense interest in all that was good, beautiful and true, has also passed away. I lay here my modest tribute of veneration to the memory of these great minds, and greet two former colleagues and friends amongst the living: the former General Secretary who so worthily presides this year, and the then my fellow Secretary of the Indian Section, now General Secretary.

To return, however, to the Copper-plates which started this current of thought, its translation into English by my late friend, Pandit Bhagwanlal Indraji, was published in the *Atti del IV Congresso Internazionale degli Orientalisti*, Firenze, 1880, vol. II, pp. 153 *et seq.*

The subject of this inscription is the gift by Mádhava of the village of Pumburpá (then called Paramapura, situated in the district of Vár̥sa, — in course of time changed into Bardez, being the contraction of two words *Vár̥sa des'a*, that is district of *Vár̥sa*) — to a clan of Bráhmans whose descendants embraced Christianity when the Portuguese conquered the country, and who then assumed a portuguese surname. The plate was most carefully preserved by them for above five hundred years, and it came into my hands only about twenty-five years ago.

The earliest Copper-plate inscription of Mádhava hitherto known bear the date of Sálivána Sáka 1290 or 1368 A. D. when the sage governed the province of

Jayantipura, the ancient Capital of the Kadámbas, referred to by Ptolemy and other ancient geographers.

About a century and a quarter after Mádhava had left Goa, it was captured by Alfonso de Albuquerque from the Sultáns of Bijápur who had seized it as their portion of the dismembered realm of the Brahmanas of Kulburga. Albuquerque unfurled the flag of the *quinas* in Goa in 1510, and King D. Manoel annexed it for ever to his little kingdom of Portugal; « Seja realenga » said D. Manoel the fortunate », e que nunca seja apartada da Corôa dos nossos Reinos. » And since then Goa has always remained loyal to the Crown of Portugal.

This was the second European invasion followed by the establishment of an Empire, the first being that founded fifteen hundred years earlier by the successors of the Great Macedonian, which extended from the banks of the Oxus to the shores of Cambay. But while the Greco-Bactrians, in exchange for their lofty ideals of arts, adopted the religious beliefs of the Indians to the extent of impressing on their Coinage various formulae and images of the Bráhminic and Budhist saints, the Portuguese strove hard to force the natives to adopt their own creed in a manner entirely discordant with their own material interests. Evidently, this incompatibility was not then perceived, for Luiz de Camões, who representing the psychical and intellectual conditions of the time, sang :

« E tamben as memorias gloriosas
Daquelles Reis que foram dilatando
A Fè, o Imperio.

(Os Lusíadas. C. I o. 2.)

Vijāyanāgara was situated on the margin of the Tungabhadra, N. Lat: 15–20, and E. Long: 76–31. It was founded on the ruins of the Hoysala dominions, Bukkarāja assuming royalty in 1354 A. D. It was also called Vidyanāgara. The former name means « city of victory »: the latter « city of learning ». It was visited by several travellers; amongst others the Persian ambassador, Abd-ez-Razzak, who, in 1441, wrote: — The city is such that the pupil of the eye has never seen one like it, and the ear of intelligence has never been informed that there existed one like it «(Hakluyt's India in the 15th. Century) » Three Italians also visited the Kingdom — Niccolò dei Conti, in the early part of the 15th Century, when it was at the height of its fame; Cesare Federici saw it at its nadir, after the disastrous battle of Talicota, in 1465, and lastly Lodovico De Barthema, who was in India, from 1505 to 1507, and was armed Knight by the Viceroy, Dom Francisco de Almeida, after the capture of Panane, his god-father being the eminent navigator, Tristão da Cunha. The two first were Venetians and the last a Bolognese.

De Barthema writes: — « La detta città di Bijyānagar è grandissima e con forti muraglie, situata in una costa di monte è di circuito di sette miglia intorno (Conti says sixty and Federici twenty-four) e ha tre cerchi di mura; è terra di gran mercantia e molto fertile dotata di tutte le gentilezze possibili ad essere; ha il più bel sito e il più bel aere che mai si vedesse con certi luoghi di cacciagione molto belli e similmente da uccellare di modo che pare un altro paradiso. (*Storia dei viaggiatori italiani* by A. de Gubernatis 1875.) Filippo de Sassetti, in a letter to Bernardo Davanzati of

Florence, describes the ruined city in 1586. Portuguese chroniclers contain much useful information of the subject, the best being, « *Chronica dos Reis de Bisnaga* » edited by David Lopes. Lisboa 1897.

Now, both Vijayanagara and Goa are mere heaps of ruins. And yet, only three centuries ago there were evident signs of greatness, of wealth, of comfort and of abundance in both. One, according to De Barthema, was a « *paradise* »: the other, was the Rome of the East, built on seven hills, with magnificent churches, a Cathedral, three fine hospitals, dungeons of the Inquisition more terrible than those of Venice, a grand arsenal and a stronghold for the Portuguese fleet in the East. But, nations, like individuals, when satiated with easy success, long for more than gamble for their neighbours territory, at first from mere excitement, but later on from hard necessity, the result being nearly always a terrible crash!

The family arms of the *Kings of Vijayanagara* were, like those of the Chalukyas, the *Varaha*, a boar avatar of Vishnu, an incarnation in which he is said to have descended to deliver the world from the power of the demon Hiranyaksha.

II

ORIGIN AND NOMENCLATURE

The designation itself reveals the origin of these medals. Ráma-ṭaṅka is made up of Ráma, the hero of the Rámáyana and seventh incarnation of Vishnu, and of the Sanskrit word टङ्क (Ṭaṅka), which means a stamped coin, whence the words *Ṭaṅka-shálá* for a mint and *Ṭaṅka-pati* for the master of the mint are derived.

From ṭaṅka are also derived the *tanqués*, a dividend payable by the village communities to the *gaumkars* or villagers, from the Sanskrit word *gráma*, a village, and the *táṅkás* of some of the early Mahomedan Kings, especially those of Gujarát, who kept their accounts in *taṅkás*, each *taṅká* being equivalent to $\frac{1}{100}$ of a rupee, just as the Moghul Emperors kept theirs in *dáms*, each *dám* being also $\frac{1}{100}$ of a rupee. This latter word, after passing through the Prakrit stage of *dámma*, can be traced to its original source of the Greco-Bactrian *dracma*. Lastly, the Indo-Portuguese coins, both silver and copper called *tangas*, some of which are still current, can also be derived from the Sanskrit *ṭaṅka*.

The name of Ráma-ṭaṅkas which some writers have taken the liberty of changing without any reason into Ramtinkis is often substituted, especially in Orissa, by that of Rámábishekis, from the Sanskrit अभिषेक (*abhisheka*), which means anointing or enthronement, in reference to the design of the coronation ceremony of Ráma and his consort Sítá on the concave surface of the medals.

III

HISTORY AND LITERATURE

Although the Ráma- \mathring{t} ankas have been known for nearly half a millenium among the inhabitants of Southern India, still the knowledge of them among strangers is comparatively modern. It is just a century since they were first brought to the notice of Western scholars. It was as the 4th of May 1799 that at the fall of the Fort of Seringapatam half a dozen Ráma- \mathring{t} ankas were found in the treasury of Tipu Sultan.

Edward Moor in his *Hindu Pantheon*, Lond. 1810, p. 434 writes: — « Among the valuable property of the late Tippoo Sultan that fell into the hands of the captors of Shrirangapatan, was a cabinet of coins and medals, Mahomedan and Hindu; many of them very old and curious. They were sold at the public prize sales; and a part was purchased by my old and highly esteemed friend Major Price, one of the prize agents, who kindly enriched my little collection of such duplicates as his lot contained. Plate 104 shows some specimens: they are all gold, of the size represented; and great care has been taken to give as exact copies as possible, both of the figures and the inscriptions ».

Plate 104 bears a representation of the Ráma- \mathring{t} anka, quarter size, concave, and about an inch in diameter, marked N.º 10. It is described by Moor as follows: — « N.º or fig. 10 is another description of coin;

but it may be questioned if it ever passed in currency; for such things were, and are, as I have been told, used in sacred ceremonies: this kind of coin is deeply concave, and as the reverse correspondingly convex. The concavity of N^o. 10 exhibits the durbar of Ráma and Sítá, who, seated on a throne, are attended, as I conjecture from the accounts of pictures given me by Bráhmans of that durbar, by these persons — on their right by Ráma's three brothers; on their left by his Guru, Visvamitra (I have a picture by the way, on which Vashista's name is given as Ráma's spiritual instructor) Raja Janaka, Sítá's mortal or adoptive father, Hanumán, and Garuda. This, however, is mere fancy; for the inscription at their feet has not been explained, and the features and distinctions of the figures are obliterated, although it is difficult to conceive by what means, protected as they are by their sunk situation. On the reverse are the remains of Hanumán's outline, and some letters, but the greater part effaced: this simian hero is, however, easily traced; and as other more perfect specimens of this kind of coinage are preserved, he would, if doubtfull, be confirmed by their similarity. If I mistake not, all the hollowed coins contain a similar group, and the convexity, Hanumán: one is in the Museum at the India House; and Hanumán is, if not or that specimen, on some other that I have seen, enclosed in the centre of intersecting triangles. Not more than half a dozen of these hollowed coins were, I think, found in Srirangapatan, and I have never heard of any others ».

About thirteen years later, Marsden in his *Oriental Coins*, Lond., 1823, represented three, of the same size,

in the Plate XLVIII, which are now with his whole collection in the British Museum.

From this date no mention was ever made of any single Ráma-ṭaṅka in the Journals of the Asiatic or Oriental Societies until about twenty-five years ago. The original concave gold Ráma-ṭaṅkas issued by the Kings of Vijáyanágara being of great variety and of fabulous price, they must have been treasured by the few fortunate possessors who worshipped them at their religious ceremonies, and never allowed strangers to touch or even to look at them.

But the demand for these articles growing in course of time, mostly on account of their religious character, several Ráma-ṭaṅkas in gold, generally of a flat surface, of the size of a rupee, and a few in silver, of the size of half a rupee, were eventually struck by goldsmiths and are now in use. They are, however, all modern, and from the point of view of a numismatist mere forgeries.

One of these flat gold Ráma-ṭaṅkas, found in the Mysore country, was described by General Pearse in the "Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal" Calcutta, 1880, pp. 115-117, which he attributed to the last of the Kings of Vijáyanágara, Rámavája, who was killed at the battle of Talikota, in 1565.

Two years after, the late Mr. J. Gibbs published in the Journal of the above mentioned Society a paper on this subject, based on the cup-shaped Ráma-ṭaṅkas, which he was able to collect in the Dekkan during the terrible famine of 1876-77. They were of various sizes and weights. This paper was *supplementary* to that of General Pearse on the flat Ráma-ṭaṅka, which was

declared to be an imitation. It was one of the flat medals now made for pilgrims to the shrines of Bellary, especially to the temple of Tirupati in the Madras Presidency. Then, in 1881, was issued a work entitled "Coins of Southern India" by Sir Walter Elliot, who described the Ráma-ṭaṅkas, "with elaborate representations of Ráma and Sítá sitting in state surrounded by numerous attendants, among whom Hanumán is conspicuous," as medals greatly prized by Vaiṣṇava Bráhmans being objects of household worship. He mentions three kinds of Ráma-ṭaṅkas of three different sizes and weights, the largest weighing four tolas or 720 grains, the middle 360 grains and the smallest 180 grains, which is represented as No. 109 on Plate III of his work. He describes it as cup-shaped, bearing on the convex side Hanumán to the left, with Nagari letters, and on the concave side Ráma and Sítá seated with attendants, and Nagari legend below. Sir Walter Elliot refers also to two other gold Ráma-ṭaṅkas which once belonged to the collection of Col. Guthrie and are now in the Berlin Museum.

To these specimens of the Ráma-ṭaṅkas hitherto published I may now add a few more which are known to exist in public and private collections. The Shanká-racharya-swámi possesses one; the Museum of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society one, weighing 360 grains, much rubbed and having in its inner side three rows of figures, purchased with the collection of the late Mr. W. E. Frere; one in the Mysore and another in the Madras Museum; one is mentioned by Mr. Sewell in his « Antiquarian Remains in the Madras Presidency » p. 132 as in the possession

of a merchant, Vellaturu Ramaya of the Cuddapa district, and two in the collection of Mr. H. Rivett-Carnac; but all these latter three, along with the five mentioned by Mr. M. H. Chakravati in the « Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal » 1893, vol. XLI, Part. I, pag. 114 et seq., seem to be flat. His description shows them to be of the lowest weight, or the so called quarter Ráma-ṭaṅkas, and the representations given on the plate attached to his paper indicate them to be quite modern, mere imitations of the cup-shaped ones, all the specimens bearing designs which are but variants of the type on the obverse, while the reverses differ very slightly.

IV

AGE AND WORSHIP

The age of the Ráma-ṭaṅkas has been variously estimated. Marsden, in describing the three medals once in his collection and now in the British Museum, states that they were believed in Southern India to have been the money of Ráma-Chandra, coined at Ramessaram or the pillar of Ráma, which is of as great repute and renown among the Hindus as the pillars of Hercules in the West. There is still a temple at Ramessaram dedicated to the hero whose image is daily washed with the water brought from the distant Ganges. It is believed that this was the currency in the Treta Yuga, a period far beyond the range of our chronology.

Among numismatists also opinions vary considerably. The late Mr. J. Gibbs thought that the pale gold medals with a single row of figures could not be less than 600 years old. Général Pearse believed that the oldest Ráma-ṭaṅkas should be attributed to the Jain or Hosysálá Bállálá dynasty of Hullabeed in the Mysore territory, which dynasty flourished from the beginning of the 10th century of our era to the year 1310 when the Mahomedan General Kafur from Dehli sacked their capital, and on the ruins of their house rose the Ráya dynasty of Vijáyanágara in 1336, which in its turn fell before a Mahomedan confederacy at the battle of Talicota, near Raichore, on the 25th of January 1565. General Pearse attributes the later cup-shaped medals to the Vijáyanágara dynasty, from which source sprang the princes of Mysore and others, although from the taking of Chandragiri by the Mahomedan King of Golconda, Abdul Kutb Sháh, in the year 1644, the monarchy became virtually extinct.

From a cursor survey of the varied currencies of Southern India it appears that the early gold coins of this part of the peninsula were mere round buttons bearing only the marks of animals, plants, or geometrical figures. The Vijáyanágara princes were, however, the first to stamp human figures or the images of deities on their gold coins and medals.

The prototype of the old gold coinages of Southern India being of a globular shape, probably of Buddhist origin, it was often marked with a punch. This coin was the monetary unity, which was subdivided into *pana* and *karsha*, which became in course of time corrupted into *fanam* and *paśa* or *cash*. The word *pana* was derived

from *pani*,¹ which means 'hand' in Sanskrit, on account of a handful of cowries (little shells), — this shell being the primitive money of the people, as it is even now in some remote parts of the East — being equivalent to a *pana*.² The issue of the globular pieces was followed by that of a currency designed generally as *tañka* from its being impressed with a die, consisting mostly of lines scrawls, flowers, tree, and animals. But, finally, during the reign and supremacy of the Vijayanagara Kings in Southern India, the design evolved itself (about the middle of the fourteenth century) from the vegetable and animal circuit into human figures.

This circumstance, then, along with the fact that these medals are found mostly in the territory that once owed allegiance to the rulers of the Vijayanagara dynasty, combined with the additional arguments in its favour of the traditions still current among its inhabitants tracing their origin to that monarchy, all tend to prove that

¹ (Il me semble difficile séparer le mot *pana*, dérivé de *pañ* « acheter, vendre » des mots latins *pendo*, *pondus*, *vendo*, *veneo*. *Pani* est la main « qui mesure ». A. D. G.)

² The shell-money was the most elementary form of currency in the East in early times before the invention of stamped or coined money. It is at the present time extensively used by the natives of various parts of Eastern Asia, Africa and the Pacific, not only as the recognised medium of exchange but also as ornament to adorn their persons and their idols. In the cannibal islands of the South Seas, for instance, the natives use this shell-money which they call *dewarra*. They use rolls of this *dewarra* bound and strung together on various strips of cane. It is much sought after by the natives for the purchase of their wives, slaves and pigs. A fathom of this shell is said to be worth 2 shillings. 250 fathams gathered together and formed into a huge coil is skillfully laced up with cane or rattan, each coil being worth L. 25 in English money.

they were first issued by these princes as memorials of the inauguration ceremony of their enthronement.

But it is also possible that the neighbouring princes, such as those of the Uryaváṅsa line of Orissa, who were contemporary with the second line of the Kings of Vijāyanágara and were also Vaishṇavas by religion, may have adopted them, either from the spirit of imitation or of emulation as the type for medals of their own coronation. This hypothesis gathers force from the fact of some of these medals being found in the districts of Telingana and of the Kritsná and Godaveri which were once conquered by the Orissan princes, and also of their bearing legends in Telugu characters, while the others have only the Nagari letters impressed on them. As for their uses, the Ráma-ṭaṅkas are highly prized by the Hindus especially of the Vaishṇava sect, who daily worship them with offerings of flowers and sandal paste.

The religious character of the medals as well as their varieties have created, as said above, a great demand for them and raised their value to fabulous prices. The Hindus also regard them as amulets or *porte-bonheur*, bringing good luck not only to those who possess but even to those who handle them. They are ever reluctant to part with them, except under the cruel necessity of a disastrous famine, as was the case in 1876–1877, when several of these medals were brought to the market for sale. They have ceased to appear in the subsequent famines, probably because the unworthy creed for gold has caused them to disappear from *India* entirely.

In a ceremony known as the bathing of idols, the

medals were also bathed with flowers, sandal paste, cards, milk, *ghi* or clarified butter, sugar, honey, fruits and water. Then the idols were sometimes bathed with gold, whenever the worshipper could afford it, this performance consisting in pouring gold pieces over the idols' heads. This accounts for the bathed condition of some of these medals, while the constant use of the sandal paste in the worship of the medals themselves is responsible for the design of the figures and inscriptions being obliterated. Both the bathing and the effacement of figures in this instance are a presumptive evidence of their comparative antiquity.

V

DESCRIPTION

From what has been said above it will be apparent that the Ráma-*tañkas* were originally intended to commemorate the enthronement of a King, and instead of bearing his portrait they bore the design of the *darbar* or inauguration ceremony of Ráma with his consort Sítá in the ancient city of Ayodhyá. These tokens or memorials of the happy event were then distributed among the magnates of the Court and the high priests who had officiated at the consecration of the ruler.

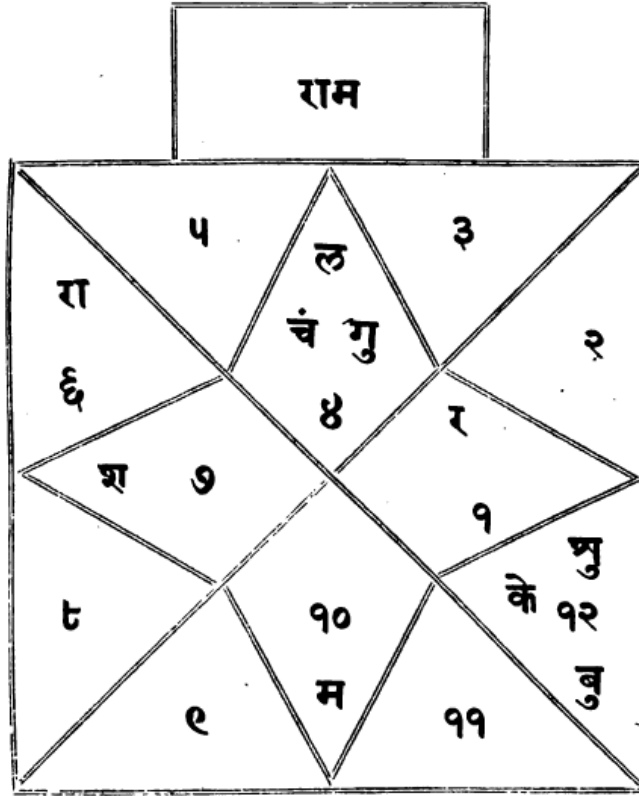
As the type often varies in design, module and size, I shall describe the one that seems to be, with one exception, the most common among the specimens hitherto known. It is the medal weighing four tolás,

the difference in weight being probably due to the distinction in rank of the recipients of the royal favour. And as there were not less than seventeen coronations in Vijayanagara alone, from the three lines of its Kings, viz: the Kuruba, from 1334 to 1488, the Narasinha or the Narsinga of the Portuguese chroniclers, from 1488 to 1542, and the usurping family of Ráma-ráyas, which ended in 1565, the number of medals issued must have been considerable.

Obv. — The concave area, which is taken to be the obverse, has a large figure in the centre seated on a *gadi*, *masnad* or throne, placed on a platform supported by pillars. This represents Ráma, and to his left is Sitá, also seated on a throne, both crowned. On his right is an attendant, said to be Vibishaṇa, the brother of Rávaṇa, up-holding a *chatra* or royal umbrella over the two seated royal personages. Above the umbrella and around it are the Sun, Moon and Stars representing the firmament. There are three more figures, on the same side, one of them, Sugrīva, holding the *chamar* or *chauri*, another insignia of royalty. On Sitá's left are Ráma's three brothers, Bharata, Lakshmana, and Satrughna. On the lower platform is a crowd of figures, standing, in attitude of worshipping, the central figure being Hanumán.

Rev. Hanumán standing, amidst intersected triangles, carrying a club. The inscription in some specimens in Nagari characters is illegible. The exception referred to above is the medal where the reverse holds the horoscope of Ráma, proving him to be more than a mere myth. It is a figure divided into twelve houses or compartments, with the initial letters of names of the planets.

The horoscope of Ráma in the form it is found preserved among the Hindu astrologers is as follows :



This horoscope is described in their astrological works thus :

श्री रामे चैत्रमासे दिनउलस
 टृते पुष्यमे कर्कलमे जी
 चेंदुं कीटशणैमकारगत
 कुजेज्ञेलशेषगेर्के कीऽ
 डेराहुमंटे तुलगत लशगे
 भार्गवे येनवम्यां पंचो चस्थे
 भिज ठा दशरथतनयो रामचंद्रो
 बभुवः ॥

This may be explained in short as « Ráma born at noon in the Pushya nakshatra on the 9th of Suddha Chaitra (during the first lunar half of the month running between April and May). It has the Zodiacal sign Cancer in the first house, where Jupiter and Moon are situated. Mars is in the seventh, Mercury, Venus and Ketu in the ninth, Sun in the tenth, Ráhu in the third and Saturn in the fourth. Five planets are exalted. This is the horoscope of Sri Ráma, son of Dasaratha. »

The *abhisheka* or coronation scene as engraven on the concave surface of the medals is beautifully described in the Ramáyana (See Yuddha Khanda, VI, 60). The late eminent Italian Indianist, Gaspare Gorresio, has translated this charming passage as follows :

« Susena recò pur colà festino dall'altro mare *che*
 « *è ad Oriente* un'idria guernita di maniglie e *piena*
 « d'acqua. Circondato dai ministri annunziò Satrugna
 « allora al domestico sacerdote, egregio fra i sacri mae-
 « stri, *esser pronta* ogni cosa per la sacra; quindi in sul-
 « l'alba pura nell'ora *che s'appella* abhigit all'entrar
 « della Luna nel segno Pusya, l'eccelso Vasistha attor-
 « niato da Brahmani, fatto sedere il magnanimo Ráma
 « con Sitá sur un seggio tutto ingemmato, colla faccia
 « volta ad oriente, nel modo stabilito dai grandi Risci
 « e prescritto dalle sacre dottrine, annunziò allora ai
 « Brahmani conforme al rito il momento opportuno alla
 « sacra di Ráma. Quindi Vasistha e Vâmadeva, Gâvâli,
 « Vigaya e Kâsyapa, Gotama e il Brahmano Kâtyâyana,
 « l'ardente Visvâmitra ed altri eccelsi fra i Brahmini
 « con acqua nitida ed odorosa sacraron Ráma prestante
 « fra gli uomini, sì come un dì i Vasu sacraron Vâsava
 « (Indra) dai mille occhi. Ei fu da prima asperso con

« acqua lustrale dai Brahmani domestici sacerdoti e da
 « vergini donzelle ordinatamente, dai duci dell'esercito
 « esultanti e dai cittadini ; spruzzato quindi con succhi
 « d'erbe d'ogni maniera dai Devi che stavan su per
 « l'etera, risplendeva *Ráma* cinto d'immenso splendore.
 « Tenevagli Satrugna l'ombrello gialleggiante e nitido,
 « e Sugriva signor de'Vânari una bianca rosta crinita.
 « Un'altra mirabil ventola crinita, candida come luna
 « teneva lieto intorno a *Ráma* il re de'Raçsasi Vibhî-
 « sana. Diede a *Ráma* il Vento, introdotto colà da Vâ-
 « sava, un aureo serto fiammeggiante nel suo aspetto,
 « adorno di cento nelumbi. Il sovrano de'Yaksi colà
 « convenuto et introdotto da Indra, donò a *Ráma* una
 « collana di perle, tempestata di gemme e di margarite.
 « Lo celebrarono i Risci, magnificandolo con voti di
 « vittoria, e s'udivano colà suoni soavi delle lodi date
 « a *Ráma*. Intuonarono canti i Devi e i Gandharvi
 « menaron danze le schiave delle Apsarase, in mentre
 « che si compieva la sacra del saggio *Ráma*. Era la
 « terra coperta di biade, eran saporosi i frutti ed olez-
 « zanti i fiori in quella consecrazione di Rama ». (*Ramâ-
 yana*, Paris, 1858, vol. X, Cap. CXII, pp. 272 et seq.)

A similar inauguration of Kings is also found in the *Mahábhárata*, when Yudhishtira was attended by many princes bringing him rich presents, the final act of this most interesting royal drama being the distribution of tokens to those present at the coronation.

With regard to *Ráma*, while the hero himself of this great Indian epic typifies the conquest of the Southern wild aborigenes by the Aryans of the North, his character represents that of the Hindu race. He is therefore lovingly named *Ráma-Chandra* or Moon-like, from

the mildness of his temperament. This rare characteristic is exemplified by his having assumed in the Treta Yuga the form of a deliver of mankind from the demon Rávana, on whose body, however, he caused magnificent obsequies to be performed before his own splendid entry into Ayodhyà to be followed by a solemn coronation. He then bestowed rich presents on his allies who returned home loaded with such gifts and Ráma commenced a glorious reign in the place of his father Dasaratha of the solar race.

VI

THE PECULIARITY OF SHAPE

The cup-shape of these medals has also been an argument for their antiquity. General Pearse in the paper quoted above attributes these Ráma-*tañkas* to the age when cup-shaped coins were prevalent in Byzantium i. e. from the 10th to the 14th centuries A. D. Here is for instance one of these Byzantine concave *solidi* issued during the reigns of Michael Ducas, Nicephorus Bataniatus and other Emperors of Constantinople during the 11th and 12th centuries of our era. But there were already in India similar concave coins called *padma tañkas*, from bearing a *padma* or lotus flower in the centre, of which there are many variations, from the four rude punch-marks, with letters representing the word *Sri* opposite each other, to those with a *çañkha* or shell (*Turbinella-repa*) and the words

(Sri Ráma) श्रीराम or two scrawls on the other side. They are said to have been made concave from the action of the punch in striking the gold plate. And the impression of the additional symbols around the central device, leaving the reverse plain, must have caused the force of the blows to give the upper side a concave form. This shape which must have originated accidentally, as in the case of the incuse Greek coins, led eventually to the adoption or use of cup-shaped dies at a later period as, to instance, when the *Ráma-ṭaṅka* medals were struck.

Thus, if the Vijáyanágara artist who designed the *Ráma-ṭaṅkas* required at all a concave model for imitation, he had certainly no need to go so far as Byzantium for a model as he had already one so close to hand in the traditional *padmataṅka*, issued by the Jaina princes of Southern India, especially the Kadambas of Jayantipura or Banarasi, whose palmy days were probably during the fifth and sixth centuries of our era. The *padma* or lotus was not only their favourite emblem, but they were also distinguished for their skill in elegant arts. Besides the *padma-ṭaṅkas*, the Indians had, moreover, another and much older Asiatic source, the Achemenian for the model their cup-shaped coins. But this theme so full of fascinating materials is yet in its infancy, as far as the study of this series is concerned, and it is quite possible that the latter may have been the inspirer of the Jaina Kings of Southern India.

Another branch of the Kadambas settled itself at Goa, about the ninth century of our era, and although their gold coinage was flat, they adopted the symbol

of Lion on the obverse, while the reverse bore an inscription in Sanskrit. This legend gave both the name of the reigning prince and the date in conformity to the cycle of Jupiter of besides a devout allusion to Saptakotiswara, the patron God of Goa, referred to above.

Another series of cup-shaped gold coins, antecedent to the issue of the coronation medals, was that of Vasudeva, one of the Indo-Scythian King. This series, again, being current in India long before the Byzantine concave coinage was issued, it is evident that as far as the shape is concerned the Vijayanagara princes had hardly to seek at Constantinople for such a precedent.

The well known silver cup-shaped coin is Persepolitan, and there are others of the class named Partho-Sassanian in silver, which are also concavo-convex. The type of Lion seizing the stag on the concave area shows its ancient pedigree, which is of the Achaemenian derivation and may, perhaps, have been even older than those times.

The type of the Lion devouring the stag symbolised the Persian Kingdom subduing hostile nations, and from a similar coin described in Duc de Luynes's *Essai sur la Numismatique des Satrapies et de la Phénicie* it appears that this type was in use for a long time in Tarsus, and in Acanthus, when these cities were under the Persian rule, it is more than two thousand years ago. There were, besides, several cognate types, such as a Lion devouring a bull or a griffin devouring a stag which had manifestly the same meaning. The reverses of all these coins, unlike the other specimen which bears the effigy of Jupiter enthroned, probably are imitation of the Alexandrian coinage, with a lateral

inscription in Persopolitan characters on both sides, were plain, like *padma-taṅkas* of Southern India.

The consideration of this subject, in connection with the cup-shape of the *Ráma-taṅkas*, induces me to say here a few words about the identity of meaning in several of such ancient types which were easily understood by the nations who originally struck them, but were afterward altogether forgotten for centuries perhaps by the generations that succeeded them until they were followed by a sudden revival after a great interval without any body being able to explain this restoration.

A striking illustration of this fact is to be found in the issue of a Persian copper coin called *Kazbegi*, struck within this century at Tabriz and elsewhere in Persia by the sovereigns of the reigning house of Khajars. It bears the type of the Lion seizing the stag, after the old type had remained forgotten and in disuse for more than two thousand years. This type of an apparently symbolic import is, moreover, said to be of an astronomical character, but the subject is too vast and far beyond the scope of this paper.

VII

CONCLUSION

Like the collection of the late Mr. J. Gibbs, the series of the *Ráma-taṅkas* in my coin-cabinet was begun during the famine of 1876-77. As people in the Dekkan, driven by hard necessities, began to get rid of their

most precious heirlooms on account of this sad calamity, these medals along with many other valuable articles began to be brought to Bombay for sale. Some were sent to the mint for being melted down, and some for sale by merchants. I had then the chance of purchasing most of them from shops and coin-dealers. Some three years later I happened to buy one, the four tola's size, from General Pearse, who wrote to me from England that he had obtained it some years ago in the Madras Presidency from an Indian Prince whose family had preserved it among their precious relics for more than three hundred years. Then I got one by exchange from the late Mr. E. Leggett of Karachi which was the one tola' size, and finally I purchased the whole collection of Mr. J. Gibbs in 1888. Thus within a decade, since I commenced to collect the Ráma-*ṭaṅkas*, my series of these very rare medals had grown to the remarkable number of thirty-seven, which I fancy even the Vijáyanágara Kings had seldom had the change of collecting or even, perhaps, of issuing.

On the occasion of my presidential address to the Antropological Society of Bombay, on the 25th of January, 1888, when at the request of some of its members the subject of « Amulets and Talismans » was discussed, all these thirty-seven Ráma-*ṭaṅkas* were shown. — I then said : — « Most of the Indian amulets are of an astrological character, invocations to the planets and to the zodiacal signs being the most popular. The zodiacal series of coins of the Emperor Jehangir became soon very scarce, imitations being frequently resorted to in order to supply the great demand that arose in course of time for them among

the rich classes. The series here exhibited is one of the few rare, genuine and complete ones hitherto collected and known. Then lastly, I must allude rather hurriedly to the series of another kind of coins, or rather medals worshipped throughout the country, but especially in Southern India. It is 'the concavo-convex series of Ráma-*ṭaṅkas*, having the Durbar or the Court of Ráma and Sítâ designed on the concave side, while on the outside there is embossed either the figure of Hanumán or the horoscope of Ráma, or sometime both of them combined. This is a medieval type....

When Marsden wrote his *Numismata Orientalia* about the end of the first quarter of this century, the specimens of the Ráma-*ṭaṅkas* known, including those described by Moor in his *Hindu Pantheon*, as found on the treasury of Tippu Sultan of Mysore or the taking of Seringapatam by the British troops, were not more than a dozen. To possess one of these curious medals is considered such an extreme good luck, that the *Devi* a Goddess of a Hindu temple in Mardol has one of them fastened to the forehead, and worshipped, along with the image of the Goddess Malsa, by a large number of devotees and pilgrims who frequent the temple. My collection contains thirty-seven of these Ráma-*ṭaṅkas*, of various shapes and sizes, and if the number of specimens one possesses were to indicate and measure the amount of good-luck they should bring him, the possessor of such a unique suite would indeed be extremely fortunate. I hope it is so, especially as I shall always be very glad and delighted to share my good fortune with all the members of this learned Society. « See *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay* » Vol. I, pag. 391.

I have now brought here only four of these Ráma-
ṭaṅkas, and as the members of this XIIth International
Congress of Orientalists, coming from the four quarters
of the globe, meet in the eternal city, I heartily wish
that these four Ráma-*ṭaṅkas* may also bring them all
kinds of happiness and the realisation of their most
cherished ideals, especially that of the solidarity of na-
tions living so far apart as the East and West, and
yet bound closely together by many ties of undoubted
kinship and of common parentage.

DR. GERSON DA CUNHA.¹

¹ (La mort a frappé cruellement notre noble collègue et ami,
lorsqu'il était retenu à Bombay, comme médecin par les devoirs de sa
profession, pendant que la peste y sévissait. Honneur à sa mémoire!
A. D. G.)
