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Members news and meetings

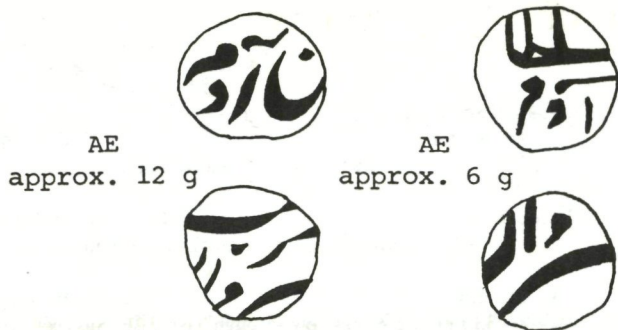
The next ONS meeting in London will be on Saturday November 6th. at 28 Little Russell Street (near the British Museum) and will commence at 2 pm. A short talk will be given by Dr. Mitchiner on some new evidence relating to South-east Asian coinage. The next ONS meeting on the Continent will take place on the same date at the Hotel Mondial in Koln (near Central Station) commencing at 10-30 am. There will be short papers by Dr. Gabrisch, Mr. Jacknath and Dr. von Kleist on aspects of Tibetan, Nepalese and Indian coinage. An ONS meeting in New York is planned to coincide with the New York International Coin Show in December. Please contact Bill Warden (36) for details.

We regret to record the death of Mr. ... (Netherlands) who had been a member since 1974.

Copper coinage of the Gakkhar Tribe*by John S. Deyell*

The Gakkhars of Northern Pakistan dominated the Pothohar sub-montane tract, bounded by the Indus River, the Salt Range of hills, and the Jhelum River. Their eponymous founder Kaigohar was reputedly Persian noble who emigrated from Isfahan in the first millenium. Historical notices attest the martial disposition of the tribe: Gakkhars battled Mahmud of Ghazni in 1008/9; fought against the Ghurid, Mu'izz-ud-din Mohammed bin Sam, in 1205/6; and materially assisted the Mughal cause against the Suri Sultans of Delhi in the sixteenth century. The Gakkhar rulers maintained varying degrees of independance until their conquest by the Sikhs in 1773. Yet despite a large measure of self-rule extending over at least seven centuries, no coinage of this tribe has so far been recorded.

It was therefore with both surprise and considerable interest that fellow ONS member Robert Senior and myself were shown copper coins of the Gakkhars, by Raja Zahur Akhtar of Rawalpindi, present head of the tribe. Colonel Akhtar, an active numismatist, explained that the coins had been recovered from excavations at Pharwala, a former stronghold of the Gakkhar rulers, located some 40 km east-north-east of Rawalpindi. Although unable to take photographs, we secured the following rubbings: —



Obv.: سلطا sultā
ن آدم n ādam

Rev.: [ض] رب [z]arb
[ه] وال [ph]arwāl [ah]

The coins are undated, but there is no difficulty in identifying the issuer. Sultan Adam Khan is first noticed as a Gakkhar co-ruler with his brother Sultan Sarang Khan after their father's defeat by the Mughal, Babur. The brothers submitted to the Mughal, and were confirmed in their lands in 1525. They remained loyal to the dynasty during the expulsion of Babur's son Humayun from India by Sher Shah Sur. During his 1541 campaign in the Punjab, Sher Shah founded the frontier fortress of Rohtas to counter their threat. Sultan Adam succeeded his brother as sole ruler when Sarang was slain in battle by the Delhi Emperor Islam Shah in 1545. It was Sultan Adam who arrested Mirza Kamran and effectively ended the rebellion against Humayun by surrendering the Mirza to his brother the Emperor, in 1553. Adam Khan's influence with Humayun's successor Akbar, was eclipsed by that of his nephew Kamal, who was in active Imperial service. The Gakkhar chief strenuously opposed Akbar's plan to divide the Pothohar between Adam and Kamal, but was defeated by the Mughal army in 1563, and died in confinement soon thereafter.

Pharwala was one of the principal fortresses of the Gakkhars. It is variously recorded in the annals as *Parhālah*, *Pharhālah*, *Pharwālah* and *Pharwālā*. It occupied a position of great natural strength, surrounded by ravines and of restricted access. This was the melancholy place where Mirza Kamran was blinded. Sultan Adam must have operated a mint here at some time during his tenure, possibly as early as 1525, more likely after his accession as undisputed ruler in 1545, and certainly before his death in 1563. The Gakkhar chronicle, the *Kaigoharnama*, specifically states that on the death of Islam Shah in 1554, the privileges of *sikka* and *khutba* were assumed by petty rulers throughout the realm. These coins may be such an issue, although their base composition does not encourage this interpretation. From the fact that the coinage was copper, and rare, we may infer that the minting was undertaken on a modest scale, and was only intended to provide small change for transactions within the garrison.

The two specimens were apparently die struck. Numismatists should note that Colonel Akhtar has advised that cast copies of the lighter specimen, above, have been produced as mementoes for distribution within his community. The copy shown to us was easily distinguishable from the die-struck original.

Abu'l-Fazl Allami, *A'in-i-Akbari*, H. Blochmann (tr.), vol. I, pp. 507-8

Raezadeh Diwan Duni Chand, *Kaigoharnameh*, Md. Baqir (ed.), pp. 12 - 17 (English), pp. 84 - 113 (Persian)

Md. Qasim Hindu Shah Firishta, *Gulshah-i-Ibrahimi* alias *Tarikh-i-Firishta*, J. Briggs (tr.)

Hasan Nizami, *Taj-ul-Ma'asir*, Elliot and Dowson (ed.), vol. II, pp. 233 - 5

Chinese engraved silver Presentation Pieces: circa 1853 / 1912

by Michael Mitchiner

(continued from Newsletter no. 79: August 1982)

8. "Kuang Hsu currency"
Silver: 1.45 gm., diam. 22 mm. (Mitchiner)
Obv. Kuang Hsu T'ung Pao
Rev. Pao Chuan/Yuan
As in the case of several other specimens this is a fictitious mint character based on those indicating the Peking Board of Revenue and Board of Works mints. The present piece is less carefully made than no. 7 (August N/L) and has been pierced for hanging.



光緒通寶
sic. sic.



寶川
sic.

IV/ *The Hsuan T'ung period: 1908 - 1912*

This cash-style specimen has been made in the same manner as earlier presentation pieces. It is important for showing that the practice of engraving such pieces in the likeness of Imperial coinage continued until the last years of the Empire.

9.

“Hsuan T'ung currency”

Silver: 2.806 gm., diam. 22 mm. (B. Andersen)

Obv. Hsuan T'ung T'ung Pao

Rev. Pao Chuan/Yuan

This is a carefully engraved piece whose fictitious mint character has a form closely resembling that used for the first specimen of Kuang Hsu (no. 7).



宣 統 通 寶

宣 寶

NB. Chuan
Peking, Board of Revenue mint

Yuan
Peking, Board of Works mint

V/ *Later amuletic presentation pieces: circa 1880 to 1912 (or later)*

The engraved silver presentation pieces included in this section belong to a parallel, and generally slightly later, group in which the designs have a completely amuletic form. Specimens in this fully amuletic group also show the adoption of a more highly developed engraving technique that involves the use of numerous diversely shaped punches for the production of a significantly more complex design. A greater proportion of the few extant engraved silver presentation pieces belong to this more refined amuletic group, than to the alternative series bearing coin-inspired designs. Most of the fifteen, or so, engraved presentation pieces in the British Museum belong to this class. On superficial inspection the specimens in this amuletic group often show affinities with the Annamese flat silver coins that were struck (probably mainly for presentation, rather than for currency use) from the 1820's until the establishment of French Protectorate over Indo-China in 1885 (and a few later issues). But, though some aspects of design could have been inspired from Annam, the auspicious legends and the method of production are quite distinctive. Indeed, the particular form of engraving technique employed in the production of these Chinese silver presentation pieces does not appear to have been applied in the numismatic field outside this small late 19th. century and early 20th. century series.⁶

The date when this class of amuletic presentation piece was manufactured has been assessed as circa 1880 to 1912. That this is still essentially a late 19th. century industry can be judged from the dates when representative pieces were acquired by the British Museum. Assessment of the date when this kind of artefact ceased being manufactured depends partly on one's interpretation of the series. If one accepts that these rather exceptional, carefully made and individually engraved specimens were essentially presentation pieces commissioned for distribution by the Emperor and by high ranking members of his Imperial Bureaucracy, then it is reasonable to infer that their manufacture ceased with the fall of the Empire when Hsuan T'ung issued his Edict of Abdication in February 1912. On the other hand this class of amuletic piece does diverge in several respects from earlier coin-inspired issues – a divergence that is particularly marked in the case of specimens counterstamped with a maker's mark (eg. no. 11 infra). So, a form of silver artefact that was initially produced for Imperial presentation purposes could well have evolved into an individually produced type of amulet manufactured on Government Departmental commission, or even on a purely commercial footing. In that case the fall of the Empire in 1912 would not necessarily have occasioned the demise of these amulets.

10. Silver amulet: 6.3 gm., 32 mm. (Mitchiner)

Obv. Yung Lu P'ing An

The Eternal Path to Peace and Serenity

Engraved from a flat disc by recessing the background using a cylindrical punch that produces a small circular depression with centre un-touched.

Rev. Dragon on either side rising towards flaming sun.

Also engraved by recessing the background but, in this case, using for the background a punch with a very small rectangular end so that the rev. background has a much finer grain than the obverse. At least five differently shaped punches were used for engraving details on the dragons and the sun.

The obverse was apparently engraved first. When the reverse was subsequently engraved traces of the design were induced to show through on to the obverse. The characters *P'ing* and *An* in the legend are similar words that can each be used to indicate the concept of Peace, Calm, Tranquillity, Serenity and Safety.



永 路 平 安



11. Silver amulet: 11.2 gm., 39 mm. (Mitchiner)

Obv. Ch'ang Ming Fu Kuei

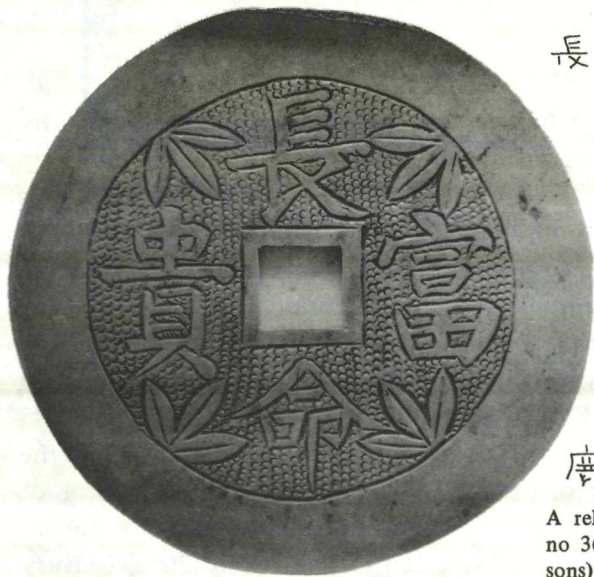
Long Life with Wealth and Honour

Rev. Ch'i Lin Sung Tzu

May the Male Unicorn and the Female Unicorn send a son

Maker's countermark: Yu - Hsing - Chu

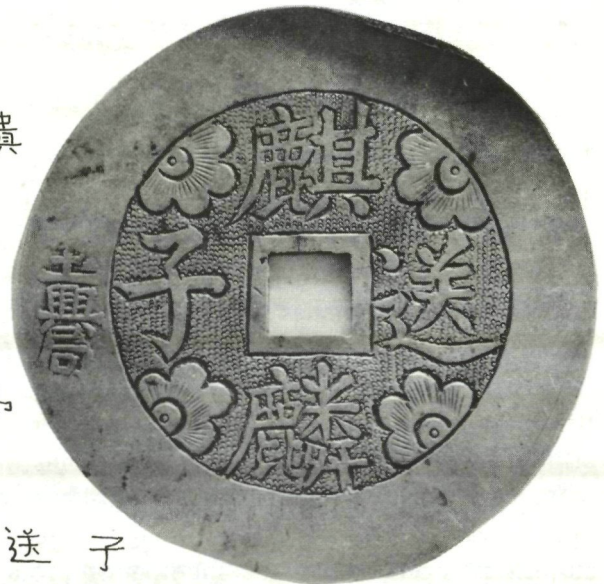
Yu-hsing (Jade prosper) Bureau (/Dept.)



長 命 富 貴

玉
興
局

玉 興 局



廣 其 鹿 送 子

A related specimen published in the British Museum Occasional Paper no. 25 (p. 82, no 36d) has the same obverse design, but different reverse (May the heavenly fairy send sons) and a different maker's name.

- 1 C. L. Krause and C. Mishler, Standard Catalog of World Coins, 1981 edition, p. 366. Nine known specimens are cited.
- 2 J. Cribb, An historical survey of the precious metal currencies of China, Numismatic Chronicle 1979, 185 - 209: vide Pl. xxv no. 1 (the British Museum specimen).
- 3 eg. M. Mitchiner, Oriental Coins and their values. III. Non-Islamic States and Western Colonies, 1979, no. 3949.
- 4 M. Mitchiner, Two Chinese silver cash-style presentation pieces of the T'ai P'ing rebellion, Seaby's Coin and Medal Bulletin, Nov. 1981, 320 - 322: vide no. 1.
- 5 M. Mitchiner, *ibid.*: vide no. 2. This piece is also catalogued here as no. 2.
- 6 Some early seventeenth century English silver counters were engraved in a comparable manner.

All photographs are enlarged with a view to demonstrating the engraving technique as clearly as possible. Numbers 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9 are enlarged Three times. Numbers 4, 5 and 6 are enlarged slightly more. Numbers 3, 10 and 11, being slightly larger specimens, are only enlarged Twice.

I am grateful to Monsieur F. Billioud for the photographs of his three pieces illustrated in the first part of this paper and to Mr. Bent Andersen for sending me his specimen of the Hsuan T'ung piece illustrated here.