



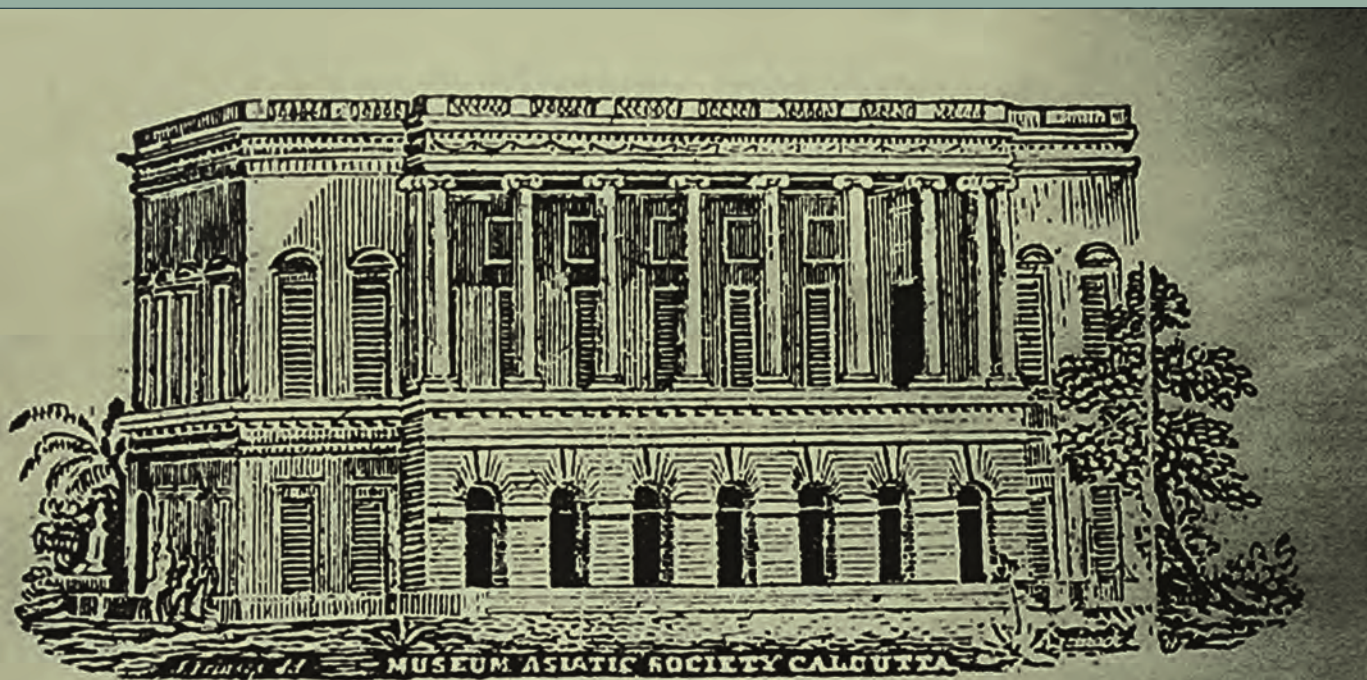
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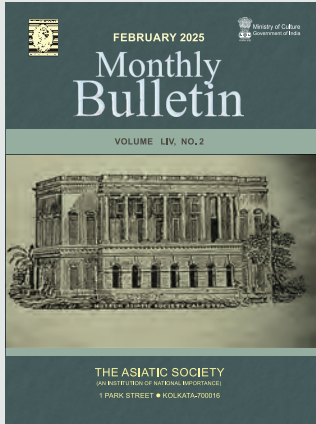


THE ASIATIC SOCIETY

(AN INSTITUTION OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE)

1 PARK STREET • KOLKATA-700016

Cover Description



From the Supreme Court to
The Asiatic Society's Own
Building (1808).

Source : *Time Past and Time Present*,
The Asiatic Society, p.32.

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ADMINISTRATOR'S PAGE

Dear Members and Readers!

Let me share with you at the beginning that to celebrate the success of Special Campaign 4.0 on Swachhata, The Asiatic Society participated in an exhibition themed 'Preservation of the Ramayana Manuscripts by Asiatic Society' at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi. You may kindly note that the Society took part in a two-day Seminar on 'Ancient Veda-Vedanta Solutions to Modern Problems of Environment and Disaster Management' in collaboration with RKMVERI i.e. Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational and Research Institute, Belur Math, Howrah (Deemed to be University as declared by the Government of India under UGC Act) and Vedanta Bharati, Mysuru from 24th to 28th December 2024 at the Abhedananda Convention Centre, Belur Math, Howrah.

The Asiatic Society entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (w.e.f. 10.01.2025) with Nalanda University in order to promote a scholarly and educational exchange between both institutions. It will remain valid for a period of three years.

Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Minister of Ministry of Culture, Government of India was presented with the Special Issue of the *Journal of The Asiatic Society* published on 225th Birth Anniversary of James Prinsep during his visit to Kolkata on 11th January 2025.

242nd Foundation Day of The Asiatic Society was observed on 15th January in a befitting manner. The programme began at the South Park Street Cemetery by placing wreaths at the tomb of our Founder, Sir William Jones followed by Flag hoisting at the premises of The Asiatic Society. Swami Atmapriyananda, Pro-Chancellor, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational and Research Institute graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Dr. T.C.A. Raghavan, Former Indian High Commissioner to Singapore & Pakistan and Former Director General, Indian Council of World Affairs delivered Foundation Day Oration on the topic 'South Asia: Today and Tomorrow' at Vidyasagar Hall of the Society. Professor Bashabi Fraser, Eminent Indian-born Scottish Academic, Writer and Co-Founder and Director of the Scottish Centre of Tagore Studies was awarded the Indira Gandhi Gold Plaque for her significant contributions to Inter-Cultural Co-operations and Dr. T.C.A. Raghavan was awarded Sri Jadunath Sarkar Gold Medal for his important contributions to History at the programme. On this occasion Exhibitions on 'Illustrated Manuscripts' and Publications of the Society were organised from 15th January to 21st January at the Ground Floor of the Heritage Building of the Society for the public.

Claire Banks, Botanical Artist, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and Dr. Mark F. Watson, Honorary Fellow, Taxonomy & Macroecology Lead, Science Division, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh visited the Society for research and collaborative purpose.

A five-day workshop on Folklore under the theme 'World of Folk Narratives: Universality, Varieties and Methodology' coordinated by Professor Ranjana Ray and Dr. Chandramalli Sengupta was held from 23rd to 28th January 2025. The 76th Republic Day was observed with due solemnity at the Park Street, Salt Lake and Ballygunge premises of the Society.

Looking forward to your active co-operation and intellectual guidance to run the Society in future.

I wish you a happy reading.

The Asiatic Society
Kolkata

Anant Sinha
Lieutenant Colonel
Administrator, The Asiatic Society

MEETING NOTICE



Ministry of Culture
Government of India

**AN ORDINARY MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING OF
THE ASIATIC SOCIETY WILL BE HELD ON
MONDAY, 3RD FEBRUARY 2025 AT 5 P.M. AT THE
VIDYASAGAR HALL OF THE SOCIETY**

**MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO KINDLY ATTEND THE
MEETING**

AGENDA

1. Confirmation of the Minutes of the last Ordinary Monthly General Meeting held on 6th January, 2025.
2. Exhibition of presents made to the Society in January, 2025.
3. Notice of Intended Motion, if any, under Regulation 49(d).
4. Matters of current business and routine matters for disposal under Regulation 49(f).
5. The following paper will be read by Dr. Rajendra Yadav :
"The Sacred Landscape of Kalinjar: Art, Architecture and Epigraphy"

1 Park Street, Kolkata-700016

Dated : 24.01.2025

Anant Sinha
Lieutenant Colonel
Administrator, The Asiatic Society

The Sacred Landscape of Kalinjar: Art, Architecture and Epigraphy

Rajendra Yadav

Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, Kolkata Circle

Abstract

Kalinjar is one of the most celebrated forts of India and well known for its checkered historic past. It lies on the border of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, perched on the high cliff of Vidhyan Hill in district Banda of Uttar Pradesh and spreading about 5.7 km. in circumference. Like other forts, the early history of Kalinjar is inconspicuous and obscured. The antiquity of this place goes back to the prehistoric time. The prehistoric men were living in the shelters of Kalinjar hill and in the surroundings of district Banda.

The first narrative of Kalinjar was recorded by Ptolemy, a Roman Geographer, who had compiled his great work in Second Century CE. Kalinjar has been mentioned as 'Kanagora' included in the Kingdom of Prasiake, which lies to the south of river Yamuna. But at another place Ptolemy has mentioned 'Tamsis' which has been identified with Kalinjar by Wilson as a place of austerity which is also referred to in the Vedas. Kalinjar was first mentioned in a Danastuti of Rigveda which mentions that the Chedi King Vasu had gifted hundred's of camel and one thousand cows after the *yajna*. It was frequently mentioned in the Indian Epics - Mahabharata, Ramayana and many of the Puranas as tapasya-sthal, sacred place, moksha-sthana, yoga-sthana (yogetra-parvata) and abode of Siva and Kali. The forested landscape of Kalinjar is unique in setting, and it has been comprehended in different ways over the time.

The changing apprehensions of mankind of the sacred geography associated with Kalinjar is reflected in the tangible and intangible Brahmanic culture associated with the site. The palaeographical evidences revealed that Pasupata ascetics (Lakudas) hailed from Vidisha around 5th century CE, occupied the natural rock-salters of Kalinjar hill and built shrines for their meditation and religious pursuits. In the next fifteen hundred years, various schools of Saivism like - Pasupata, Saiva-siddhanta and Siddha schools have flourished under the patronage of Kalachuries, Pratiharas, Chandellas, and Bundellas. A large number of rock-cut and independently carved images of, Siva, Siva-lingas, Bhairava, Kali, Ganesa, Vishnu, Surya, Ekadas-rudra, Saiva-acharyas, Jalavahaka and many more enigmatic images are the tangible remains of past religious imagery. Though the intangible traditions are reconstructed from the scanty data available to us in form of sculptures and inscriptions. The talk is intending to highlight the use of space at the site of Kalinjar as reflected in the archaeological and epigraphical evidences. This is an attempt to shed light on the evolving sacred geography associated with Kalinjar.

Rasaratnamālā of Narasimha Kavirāj : A Critical Analysis

Rita Bhattacharyya

Life Member, The Asiatic Society

The text *Rasaratnamālā* of Narasimha Kavirāj is available in manuscript form holding Accession No-G8479 in Manuscript Repository of the Asiatic Society. As far as the knowledge goes no critical edition has so far been done on this valuable manuscript of Alchemy. Through searching the *New Catalogus Catalogorum*, three texts in the name of *Rasaratnamālā* are available.

1) *Rasaratnamālā* (Anon) VSP (Vaṅgiya Sāhitya Pariṣat) MS. No. 1078

2) *Rasaratnamālā* of Narasimha Kavirāj—The Asiatic Society MS. No. G8479

3) *Rasaratnamālā* of Nityanātha - A Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in Central Provinces ed. by F. Kielhorn, Nagpur:1926

The exact date of *Rasaratnamālā* of Narasimha Kavirāj is not known. The colophon of the MS. (G8479) of the Asiatic Society reads thus '*saṃvat 1934 śrāvāṇa kṛṣṇa pratipada guruvāsare subhamastu*' means that the MS. is written in 1934 saṃvat which means 1877 CE. Probably this date is the date of copying the MS. But for getting the exact date of Narasimha Kavirāj we have to depend on some conjectural elements. In this particular MS. the author frequently used the name

of '*Rasendra*'. After surveying the different alchemical texts of Sanskrit three or four MSS. in the name of *Rasendra* are available. Among them one is *Rasendracintāmaṇi* (Anon), the second one is *Rasendrasārasaṅgraha* authored by Gopālakṛṣṇa and the third one is *Rasendrakalpadruma* authored by Rāmakṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭa, son of Nilakaṇṭhabhaṭṭa. So depending on this statement it can be assumed that the author probably mentioned the name of *Rasendrakalpadruma*. The great scientist of History of Science Professor Samarendra Nath Sen mentioned in his epoch making book *Vijnaner itihās* that *Rasendrakalpadruma* of Rāmakṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭa collected a lot of informations from the texts *Rasārṇava*, *Rasamaṅgala*, *Rasāmṛta* and *Rasaratnasamuccaya*. In that text *Vijnaner itihās* of S. N. Sen the date or *Rasārṇava* and *Rasaratnasamuccaya* of Second Vāgbhaṭa (9th cent. CE.) of *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya*, are referred to 13th century CE. So from this assumption it can be said the *Rasaratnamālā* could not be earlier than 13th century CE. It is important to note that the name of Nityanātha is mentioned in *Rasaratnamālā* of Narasimha Kavirāj. From this reference it can be said that the date of Narasimha Kavirāj is

latter than Nityanātha. After different discussions it can be said that the composing date of *Rasaratnamālā* might be 15th or 16th century CE. Like other texts the author starts the text with the invocation of God. Then he tried to justify the name of the text. He told that the text is stung together with the extracts of gold, silver, pearl, diamond, *vaidurya*, *nīla* and *marakata*. Then he applauded the merit of mercury (*pārada*). He opined that mercury is pure, killer of three types of heat (*tāpatraya*), e.g. *vāyu*, *pitta* and *kapha* and imperishable (*tāpatrayaharaḥ śuddho rājate pārado'cyutaḥ*) and he also suggested that the elixir (*rasa*) is stronger than medicine (*kṣīpramā rogyadāyitvādouśadhebhyo'dhiko rasaḥ*). Moreover he told that if the learned man, proficient in different branches of knowledge, does not know the use of *rasa* then he will be joking like the wise man without religion (*dharma*). He also appreciated the benefits of different herbs like garlic, ginger etc. For purifying and sterilising the juices he mentioned different types of methods like *pātana*. *Pātana* is again divided into three kinds such as *ūrdhwapātana*, *adhahpātana* and *tiryak pātana*. For executing these methods different apparatuses like *vidyādhara yantra*, *lāvaṇ yantra*, *ḍamaru yantra* and *dolā yantra* are delineated in the text RRM according to their special features. In the text *Rasārṇava* it is said that the knowledge of *yantra* or apparatus is much powerful (*yantravidyā mahābalā*).

For critical analysis of the text we have to go for centuries back. Since Vedic age, i.e., from the days of Ṛgveda

Soma creeper for extracting *rasa* or juice got special importance like Sun, Fire and Air. It is said that the Soma juice gives the gods immortality. These creepers are called '*Amṛta*' by the celestial beings. A lot of herbal creepers and plants were worshipped in various Vedic *sūktas*.

In the period of Atharvaveda composed in later days of Ṛgveda different spells are uttered for the treatment of diseases, so also the methods of preparing different kinds of medicines are also found to be mentioned there. The use of black herbal product from forest (*vanaja*) for treating the leprosy was found in Atharvaveda. There it is said 'O! Creeper you are born in night, you are deep, smooth, black coloured, you please colour the leprosy and remove the white sign'.

The origin of Alchemy evolved from the thought of Atharvaveda. In Atharvaveda the praise of pearl, gold and lead was found available. The gold was used there as the enhancement of happiness and prolongation of life and lead was said to be helpful for removing the evil effect. The God Varuna gives blessings to lead, Agni gives the power and Indra is unique to eradicate the evil effect of lead.

Since long time back the ashes of mercury is used as medicine according to Tantric rule. This ash of mercury is divided into three kinds. They are white ash, black and red ash. This red ash is again divided into two according to the method of preparation. They are *hīngula* and *Rasasindūra* or *makaradhvajā*. Apart from the another two types of red ashes are

found. But the use of that type of ash was not prevalent in our country, but somewhere its mention is found. For preparing this red ash there is no need of salt, sulphur and alum. After heating the mercury when the extraction of mercury is deposited then the collection of red colored globules are found. Not only the mercury is transmuted to ash by heating but there should be wide space for circulation (entry and exit) of air and for that purpose the special type of heating oven should be used otherwise the mercury will be vapourised with the heat.

At the end of Medieval age and the emergence of Renaissance the influence of Alchemy remained intact. Like the other branches of Science the outcome of Modern Alchemy is found identifiable in the 15th and 16th CE. A group of Alchemists gradually lost their faith in the discovery of so-called touch stone (*paraś-pāthar*) and allied invention of elixir (*sudhā*). So they started their experiments in alchemy in different ways. The transformation of metal in artificial way was the main target and the inspiration of alchemists in the field of Alchemy. When they did not get any new avenue in this respect then they tried their best to reveal a new way to keep alive the alchemical research.

In the early period medicine was mainly prepared from the herbs of different plants. But the scientists of advanced period felt the necessity of the application of alchemy in producing medicine. Since that time a deep relation was established between Alchemy and Medicine. According to them the main duty of the alchemists is to invent new medicine, preparing those

through purification and examine their merits and demerits through alchemical reactions. And Doctors are responsible to examine and explain the chemical components of new drugs invented by the Alchemists. The special feature of Chemical Research during 15th and 16th century is in close relation between Chemistry and Medicine and such that it is termed as the period of 'Latro-Chemistry'. In that connection one passage may be included here—The Great Scientist as well as Great Indologist Professor B. V. Subbarayappa in his article 'Transmutation: Ancient Indian Concepts and Practices' says—the early concept of transmutation had perceivably two facets—one of converting the base metal into gold of ever-lasting glitter and the other of transforming the transient human body into one of permanence with the soul. He also quotes a verse of *Bhagavadgītā* in this respect and says "the soul has neither birth nor death; it is not slain when the body is slain, it is eternally the same, just as a person puts on new garments giving up the old ones, the soul similarly accepts new material body, giving up the old and decaying ones". Professor Subbarayappa also boldly told that Indian Alchemy of both Sanskrit and Tamilian tradition, developed a wide variety of chemical processes for the ostensible transmutation of metals and preparation of elixir of life, in which mercury occupied a prime position. The Literature on Indian Alchemy called *Rasaśāstra* is perceptibly voluminous and methodical in the presentation of a variety of processes whose number is legion. Of these processes eighteen *saṃskāras* or complex treatments,

which were adopted for the potentiation of mercury deserve special mention—

The eighteen processes concerning mercury as the central element are as follows—

i) *Svedana*: Steaming mercury with a number of plant substances, some minerals, alkalies and salts.

ii) *Mardana* : Rubbing steamed mercury in a mortar alongwith some plant and acidic materials.

iii) *Mūrchana* : Triturating mercury in a mortar with some more plant extracts till it loses its own character and form.

iv) *Utthāpana* : Steaming mercury again alongwith alkalies, salts and three myrobalans, alum etc. and rubbing mercury again in sunlight so that the characteristics of mercury, freed from impurities, are brought into play again.

v) *Pātana* : Three types, viz., *ūrdhva* (upwards), *adhah* (downwards) and *tiryaka* (sideways); grinding mercury with alkalies, salts and others and subjecting the product to distillation.

vi) *Rodhana* : Mixing the distilled mercury with saline water in a closed pot to restore the 'vigour or potency' of mercury.

vii) *Niyamana* : Continuation of the process by steaming mercury for three days with a number of plant products, alum, borax, iron sulphate etc. to restrain mobility of mercury.

viii) *Sandīpana* : Steaming this product with the alum, black pepper, sour gruel, alkali and some vegetables substances to 'kindle' the desire of mercury to attain the power of assimilation.

ix) *Grāsa or Gaganagrāsa* : Fixation and assimilation of the 'essence' of mica (gagana) to the desired extent.

x) *Cāraṇa* : Boiling this product with sour gruel leaves certain plants, alum and others for a week so that mica is fully assimilated.

xi) *Garbhadruti* : Heating and treating mercury with the desired metallic substances so that the 'essence' of the later becomes liquified and the resultant, after cooling passes through a piece of cloth.

xii) *Bāhyadruti* : Obtaining externally the 'essence' of minerals or metallic substances.

xiii) *Jāraṇa* : Heating the mercurial product with the desired minerals or metals, alkalies and salts so that they are fully digested or assimilated.

xiv) *Raṅjana* : A complex process involving the treatment of mercury with sulphur, gold, silver and copper as well as salts in such a way that mercury attains colour.

xv) *Sāraṇa* : digesting mercury with gold and silver in an oil-base to increase its ability towards transformation.

xvi) *Kramaṇa* : Smearing mercury with several plant extracts, minerals, milk etc. and then heating it carefully with a view to enabling it to possess transmuting powers.

xvii) *Vedhana* : Rubbing the resultant mercury with a few select substances including oil so that it acquires the transmuting power.

xviii) *Bhakṣaṇa* : Consuming the prescribed quality of the mercurial product which has undergone the foregoing 17 processes for the rejuvenation and longevity. Professor Subbarayappa further stated that

this sequence was rigorously followed by Indian Alchemists, but there were variations in the choice of plants and their extracts, salts, alkaline and acidic substances, minerals and other ingredients. It is remarkable to note that most of processes of the above-mentioned list are found in the concerned text *Rasaratnamālā* of Narasimha Kavirāj, only some changes in the name of some technical terms. In *Rasaratnamālā* nineteen types of treatments are mentioned in place of conventional eighteen types of treatments.

There it is said—

*Svedanam mardanam murchotthā
panam pātanam tathā*

*Rodhanam niyamam cānuvāsanam
dīpanam nava /*

*Grāsaśca cāraṇa garbhadrutiśca
cāraṇa tathā*

*Bāhyadrutiśca rāgaśca sāraṇam
kramanam tathā //*

*Vedhanam bhakṣaṇam caiva saṁskā
ra daśa cāpare*

*Ete navadaśaproktāḥ saṁskārāḥ
śaṁkareṇa hi //*

In the above list of *Rasaratnamālā* 'anuvāsana' or aromatisation (*Suśruta*, 4.37.2) is included other than 18 types of *saṁskāra* or treatments and *sandīpana* is termed as *dīpana*.

The Indian alchemical literature in Sanskrit refers to the multidimensional use of a variety of minerals. The pre-eminence of minerals as alchemical substance is first recognized in the famous sayings in *Rasaratnākara* of Nāgārjuna of 8th century, CE., which attribute minerals with some wonderful properties of conversion of base metals into higher metals. The range of sixteen

minerals distributed in superior *rasas* or *mahārasas* and subsidiary classes (*uparasas*) according to their degrees of importance as alchemical substance comprise :

i) *Rasas* or *Mahārasas*, eight in number generally include—*abhraka* (mica), *vaikrānta* (a precious stone having eight surfaces and six angulas), *mākṣika* (copper pyrites), *vimala* (iron pyrites), *śilājatu* (bitumen), *sasyaka* (copper sulphate), *capala* (bismuth) and *rasaka* (calamine).

ii) *Uparasas* also eight in number comprise *gandhaka* (sulphur), *gairika* (red-ochre), *kāsisa* (iron sulphate), *tuvari* (alum), *tālaka* (orpiment), *manahśilā* (realgar), *añjana* (collyrium, compounds of antimony) and *kankuṣṭha* (tinstone or cassiterite). These schemes of members in both groups, enumerated in *Rasaratnasamuccaya* are not followed in all the texts. In *Rasaratnasamuccaya* the world of minerals is divided into three kinds—there are *rasa*, *uparasa* and *ratna*. In *Rasaratnamālā* these types of *mahārasas* and *uparasas* are also mentioned with some variations. *Rasaratnamālā* starts with the discussion of *mahārasa* with *abhraka* and their saturating, burning and melting processes are described with the help of *vida* and *mūṣā*. Different types of *vida* and *mūṣā* are mentioned in the text. Different kinds of *mūṣā* or crucibles are available. They are *bhasmamūṣā* (ash crucible), *andhamūṣā* (blind) crucible), *mūkamūṣā* (covered crucible), *lohamūṣā* (iron crucible), *nāgamūṣā* (lead crucible), *prakaśamūṣā* (open crucible), *nalamūṣā* (refractory crucible). In *RRM* it is said—*rasakarmanyupayuktā vikhyātā*

vajramūṣeyam. In ancient Indian Silpa texts like *Mānasollāsa* and *Śilparatna mūṣā* was used for preparing idol from brass, copper, silver and bronze.

Besides *mahārāsa* eight types of subsidiary *rasas* (*uparasas*) are also found. But in some cases *uparāsa* is replaced by *mahārāsa* in other texts like *Rasārṇava*. In the text *Rasaratnamālā* *rasayana* is said the killed of all diseases (*sarvarogapaham proktam rasāyanamuttamam*). In *Rasasevanapathyapathyavidhi* chapter of *RRM* different types of *rasas* like. *mṛtasañjīvanī*, *cintāmañīrasa*, *vetālarāsa*, *lokanātharāsa*, *mahāvahnīrasa* and *nārikelaphalāmṛta* are also mentioned for healing up disease. In *viṣopaviṣa* chapter of *RRM* 'viṣa' is defined as *viṣā dajanakatvācca viṣamityabhidhiyate*. Movable and immovable these two types of poisons are mentioned in this chapter. They are also again divided into various types and they are named differently.

After discussing different procedures of extracting *rasa* different types of diseases like *pāṇduroga*, *prameha*, *jvara*, *chardi*, *śula*, *kāsa*, *śvāsa*, *aśmari*, *kuṣṭha*, *rājayakṣma*, *arśa*, *hṛdroga*, *vata*, *amlapitta*, *atisāra* etc. and their remedies with the help of *rasa* are also found to be mentioned.

For preparing medicine *puṭapāka* or Roasting is an essential procedure. This procedure is mentioned in the text *Rasārṇava* and other *Rasa* texts. In *Rasārṇava* the definition of *puṭa* is enumerated. There it is said *rasādidravapākanam pramāṇajñapakam puṭam* and different types of *putas* are mentioned

in *Rasārṇava*. They are, *lāvakaṭa*, *kapotaṭa*, *govaraṭa*, *mahāṭa*, *gajaṭa*, *varāṭa*, *kumbhaṭa*, *bhūdharaṭa* and *bhāṇḍaṭa*. So also in *Rasaratnamālā* different types of *puṭas*, i.e., cooking are discussed. They are *gajaṭa*, *turangaṭa*, *varāṭa*, *kukkuṭaṭa*, *tittiraṭa* so on and so forth. In this way cooking process (*pākavidhi*) of *rasa* is explained with special reference to the application of medicinal herbs.

Thus the text *Rasaratnamālā* is critically assessed in brief. The full length study of this hitherto unexplored MS. will definitely add to the treasure of the Alchemical knowledge of the Iatro-Chemical era in India.

Abbreviation :

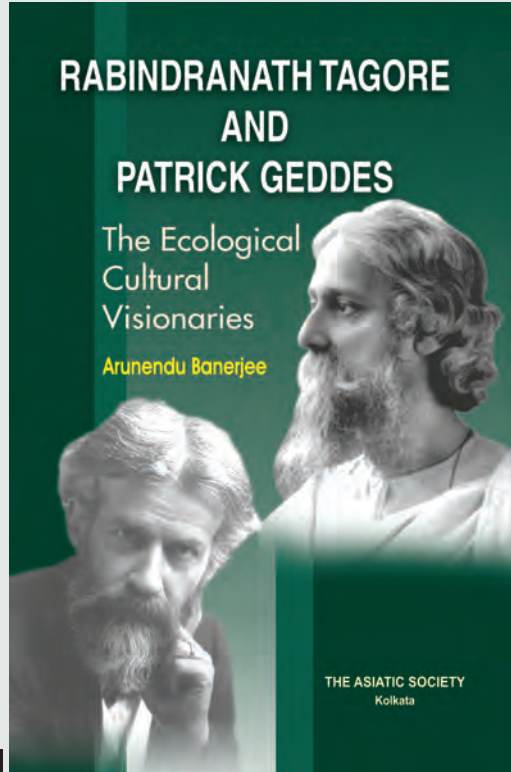
- MS. —Manuscript
 MSS. —Manuscripts
RRM —*Rasaratnamālā*
 BS — Bengali Sana
 INSA — Indian National Science Academy
 ed. — edition
 rept. —reprint

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Accessibility to Indian Traditional Knowledge System (ITKS): An Initiative by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India

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Introduction :

The libraries and the Information Resource Organizations have an essential role to play in safeguarding the culture and collective knowledge of Society. Various governmental and non-governmental organisations are striving to make inroads by adding modern technology to the preservation and rejuvenation of Indian culture and heritage. They have their own libraries working to rejuvenate, document, and preserve the knowledge and culture of traditional India. Embodying the vast cultural legacy and intellectual traditions of India, the Indian Traditional Knowledge System embraces a wide gamut of study areas, like Education, Sanskrit, Philosophy, Mathematics, Governance, Legal Studies, Commerce, Astronomy, Medicine, and the Arts. Libraries have, throughout history, played a fundamental role in conserving and renovating this wide historical knowledge in the form of manuscript acquisition, cataloguing, restoration, and preservation of manuscripts, books, and other forms of digital resources. In the light of the 21st century, libraries are perpetually changing as they are adapting to new means and technologies

of creating and making available both the traditional and digitised information.

Indian Traditional Knowledge System (ITKS) simply puts forth the rich intellectual traditions and cultural heritage of India. This system therefore includes absolutely all the different forms of academic and educational disciplines ranging from Astronomy, Music, Architecture, Philosophy, Yoga, Ayurveda, and Sanskrit Literature and Mathematics. All these have an excellent influence in forming the culture and social structure of India. It is only the libraries that create an ongoing linkage between the old, conventional knowledge and the new, modern context in order to restore, improve, and further develop this huge repository of information. This invaluable legacy of Indian traditional knowledge and philosophy forms the foundation of the NEP 2020, which values the systematic way of communicating knowledge. The National Educational Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) recommends the incorporation of the Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into the curriculum at all levels of education.

Today, rare manuscripts are in the process of making them accessible to the present and future generations as the Asiatic Society Library and the National

Library of India laboriously gathered, indexed, and digitally preserved those rare manuscripts. For example, in order to close the gap between ancient traditional knowledge and modern technology, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and National Mission for Manuscripts have digitised thousands of manuscripts and made them available online; Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library and Rampur Raza Library has digitised thousands of books and other valuable resources and made them available online.

The present study is restricted to the Forty-Six (46) Ministry of Culture (MOC) organisations under the Government of India, along with their libraries and Information Resource Centres. The study presents how these organisations promote educational documents, facilitate research,

and serve as a repository, especially of 'Rare Books', 'Manuscripts', 'Museum Collections' and 'Museum Paintings' which contribute to the Indian Traditional Knowledge System.

Scope & Coverage :

The current study has been limited to organisations associated with the Ministry of Culture (MOC), Government of India. This study explores a particular category of items i.e. - Rare Books, Manuscripts, Museum Collections and Museum Paintings available on the official website of the Ministry of Culture and the official portal designated as 'Indian Culture' that operates under this Ministry.

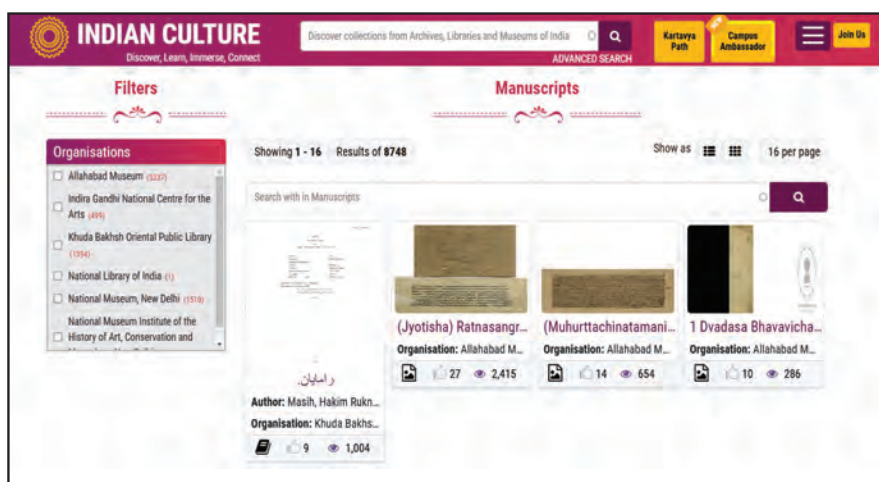
The following organisations are alphabetically state-wise listed below with their establishment year:

Sl. No.	State	Organisation Name	Abbrev.	Estb. Year
1	Arunachal Pradesh	Central Institute of Himalayan Culture Studies	CIHCS	2003
2	Bihar	Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library	KBOPL	1891
3		Nava Nalanda Mahavihara	NNM	1951
4		Archaeological Survey of India	ArSI	1903
5	Delhi	Central Secretariat Library	CSL	1891
6		Centre for Cultural Resources and Training	CCRT	1979
7		Delhi Public Library	DPL	1951
8		Gandhi Smriti & Darshan Samiti	GSDS	1984
9		Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts	IGNCA	1985
10		Lalit Kala Akademi	LKA	1954
11		National Archives of India	NAI	1891
12		National Gallery of Modern Art	NGMA(D)	1954
13		National Mission for Manuscripts	NMM	2003
14		National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities	NMMA	2007
15		National Monuments Authority	NMA	2010
16		National Museum	NM	1949
17		National Museum Institute of the History of Art, Conservation and Museology	NMIHACM	1989
18		National School of Drama	NSD	1959
19	Delhi	Prime Ministers Museum and Library	PMML	1964
20		Sahitya Akademi	SA	1954
21		Sangeet Natak Akademi	SNA	1953

LIBRARY

Sl. No.	State	Organisation Name	Abbrev.	Estb. Year
22	Jammu and Kashmir	Central Institute of Buddhist Studies	CIBS	1959
23	Karnataka	National Gallery of Modern Art	NGMA(K)	2009
24	Madhya Pradesh	Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya	IGRMS	1977
25	Maharashtra	South Central Zone Cultural Centre	SCZCC	1986
26	Nagaland	North East Zone Cultural Centre	NEZCC	1986
27	Punjab	North Zone Cultural Centre	NZCC	1985
28	Rajasthan	West Zone Cultural Centre	WZCC	1986-87
29	Tamil Nadu	Kalakshetra Foundation	KF	1936
30		South Zone Cultural Centre	SZCC	1986-87
31	Telangana	Salar Jung Museum	SJM	1951
32	Uttar Pradesh	Allahabad Museum	AM	1931
33		Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies	CIHTS	1967
34		National Research Laboratory for Conservation of Cultural	NRLCC	1976
35		North Central Zone Cultural Centre	NCZCC	1986
36		Rampur Raza Library	RRL	1774
37		Anthropological Survey of India	AnSI	1945
38	West Bengal	Central Reference Library	CRL	1955
39		Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre	EZCC	1985
40		Indian Museum	IM	1814
41		Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies	MAKAIAS	1993
42		National Council of Science Museums	NCSM	1978
43		National Library	NL	1948
44		Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation	RRRLF	1972
45		The Asiatic Society	TAS	1784
46		Victoria Memorial Hall	VMH	1906

Table 1: Alphabetically State-wise list of Forty-Six (46) Organisations under the Ministry of Culture (MOC), Government of India



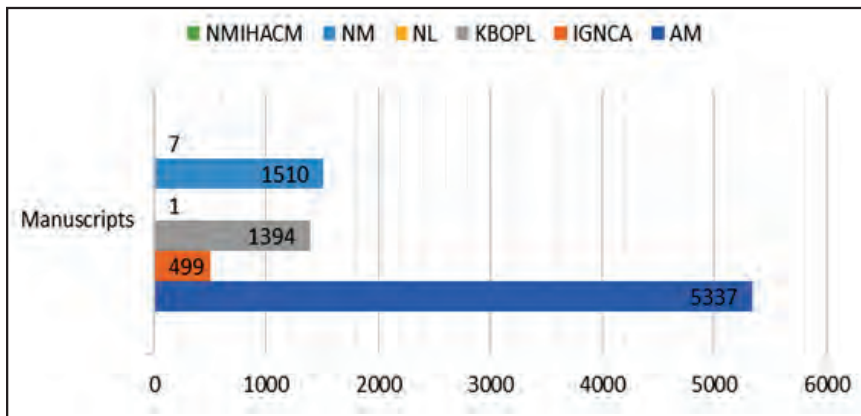
<https://indianculture.gov.in/manuscripts>

Data Tabulation and Data Analysis :*Table 2: Distribution of 'Rare Books' Collection according to Languages available in the 'Indian Culture' Portal*

Languages	ArSI	CSL	IGNCA	NL	RRL	SJM	SNA
Arabic	57	-	-	399	-	05	-
Assamese	-	-	-	04	-	-	-
Bengali	07	-	01	1658	-	01	02
Dutch	95	-	01	01	-	-	-
English	3011	4637	216	5421	-	8281	23
French	203	05	06	27	-	28	-
German	184	01	10	18	-	17	-
Greek	07	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gujarati	03	01	01	11	-	01	03
Hindi	24	01	03	86	-	02	02
Italian	24	-	02	06	-	16	-
Japanese	01	-	02	-	-	-	-
Kannada	-	02	-	08	-	-	-
Latin	13	01	-	09	-	07	-
Malayalam	-	-	-	06	-	-	-
Marathi	02	06	-	38	-	-	-
Norwegian	01	-	-	-	-	-	-
Odia	-	-	-	01	-	-	-
Pali	02	-	-	-	-	-	-
Persian	10	02	-	394	-	03	-
Portuguese	19	-	-	-	-	-	-
Punjabi	-	-	-	01	-	-	-
Russian	01	-	-	-	-	01	-
Sanskrit	132	29	138	34	-	02	03
Spanish	03	-	-	03	-	05	-
Tamil	05	01	-	13	-	-	01
Telugu	-	-	-	03	-	01	-
Thai	01	-	-	-	-	-	-
Turkish	01	-	-	01	-	02	-
Urdu	06	02	-	06	450	-	-

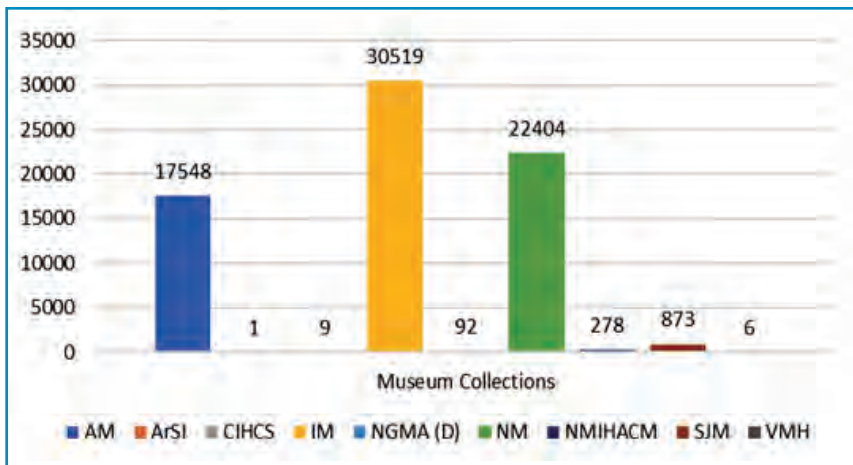
Table 2 shows that the available number of rare books in English language is the maximum (Total No. 21589). Six organisations have uploaded Rare Books in English Language to the portal. Maximum numbers of books in English language (Total No. 8281) were uploaded by 'SJM'. A total of 1669 Bengali books were uploaded among which 168 were uploaded by NL. 461 books in Arabic, 464 books in Urdu, 409 books in Persian language, and a total of 338 books in Sanskrit have been uploaded by different organisations. There are books in many other languages available.

Chart 1: Distribution of 'Manuscripts' Collection Available in the 'Indian Culture' Portal



It is evident that six (13.04%) organisations have uploaded Manuscripts to the 'Indian Culture' official website. Maximum numbers of Manuscripts (Total no. 5337) were uploaded and made available by 'AM' in the 'Indian Culture' portal.

Chart 2: Distribution of 'Museum Collections' Available in the 'Indian Culture' Portal



The chart shows nine (19.56%) organisations have provided Museum Collections on the 'Indian Culture' website. Maximum numbers of Museum Collections (Total no. 30519) were uploaded by 'IM' followed by 'NM' and 'AM'.

Table 3: Distribution of 'Museum Paintings' Collection according to Types of Paintings Available in the 'Indian Culture' Portal

Types of Paintings	AM	NGMA (D)	NMIHACM	SJM
Collage	-	49	-	-
Colour Palette	-	-	29	-
Drawing	-	1829	61	-
Miniature Painting	2010	-	-	18
Modern Painting	425	-	-	02
Painting	-	6057	1361	03
Print	-	1135	-	-
Sketch	-	1913	24	-
Thangaka	137	-	-	-

Table no. 3 illustrates different types of Museum paintings uploaded by 04 organisations and are available in the 'Indian Culture' portal. A total of 10983 Museum Paintings were uploaded by 'NGMA (D)'

Findings :

The specific major findings of the study are as follows:

- After a thorough evaluation of the 'Indian Culture' portal, it is observed that there are no records uploaded from 18 organisations.
- From the study, it is observed that among 46 organisations under the Ministry of Culture (MOC), Government of India, 07 (15.22%) organisations have already made Rare Books accessible through the 'Indian Culture' official website.
- The maximum number of Rare Books 8372 and 8148 were uploaded by 'SJM' and 'NL' respectively, followed by 4688 and 3812 uploaded by 'CSL' and 'ArSI' respectively on the website.
- It was found that a maximum of 8281, 5421, 4637 and 3011 Rare Books in English Language were uploaded by 'SJM', 'NL', 'CSL' and 'ArSI' respectively on the "Indian Culture" Official Website.
- The maximum number of Manuscripts 5337 and 1510 was made available by 'AM' and 'NM' respectively, followed by 1394 and 499 Manuscripts uploaded by 'KBOPL' and 'IGNCA' respectively.
- In the case of Museum Collections 17548, 30519 and 22404 were made available by 'AM', 'IM', and 'NM' respectively, followed by 873, 278 and 92 Museum Collections were uploaded by 'SJM', 'NMIHACM' and 'NGMA (D)' respectively.
- The maximum number of Museum Paintings 10983 and 2572 was made available by 'NGMA (D)' and 'AM' respectively, followed by 1475 and 23 Museum Paintings were uploaded by 'NMIHACM' and 'SJM' respectively on the 'Indian Culture' portal.

Conclusion :

The MOC organisations may treat the Indian culture portal as a leading platform for research purposes in the academic environment. Library professionals should consider the management of the Indian Traditional Knowledge System as of great importance. There is a need to evolve policies toward the collection and preservation of ITKS, which is presently facing extinction. Documentation of ITKS involves not only collection and dissemination but also preservation and accessibility through contemporary technologies. Considering all the findings, this study recommends that all the MOC organisations may upload their resources in the 'Indian Culture' portal to promote the research scholars and faculties on the activities of research and development.

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Upendranath Brahmachari and The Asiatic Society

Keka Adhikari Banerjee

Curator, The Asiatic Society

A news report published in News 18 Bangla states that the deadly disease 'Kala-Azar' has re-emerged in Uttar Pradesh after a 20-year hiatus. A 17-year-old boy has been affected by this disease, prompting the government to take precautionary measures to prevent its spread. Insecticides have been sprayed within a half-kilometer radius of the boy's house.

According to a report by *The Times of India*, the 17-year-old boy is a resident of Triveninagar in Lucknow. He had not travelled anywhere in the past few months but was suffering from a persistent low-grade fever and severe tiredness for over a month. After undergoing examination at the Lucknow Medical College and Hospital, the disease was diagnosed as 'Kala-Azar'.

This 'Kala-Azar' was a dangerous disease and spread like an epidemic especially in some regions of India including the lower Bengal region. Almost 99 out of 100 persons who were affected by this deadly disease faced death. Upendranath Brahmachari in the 23rd session of Indian Science Congress

mentioned that he used metallic antimony in small particles and started treatment with this intravenous injection where it got tremendous success and the death rate decreased into 1 or 2 persons among hundred. In the words of the British doctor



H. E. Shortt "Overnight, a death rate of 90% was transformed into a cure rate of 90%." The medicine saved millions of lives within India & abroad. In the onward march of search after truth, an organic antimonial has been discovered by him which today also stands pre-eminent in the treatment of the disease. Upendranath Brahmachari, the pioneer of tropical medicine was

the first Indian to be nominated for the Medicine and Physiology for Noble Prize. He was a renowned scientist, researcher in the field of Medicine and was known for his work on the treatment of Kala-Azar, a disease caused by the infected sand fly. He was associated with a number of scientific institutions of India. Notable among them are University of Calcutta, The Asiatic Society of Bengal, Indian Association for the Cultivation of Sciences, Indian Museum, Indian Chemical Society.

In this article, we will discuss some of the lesser known facts related to his long association with the Asiatic Society of Bengal through his correspondences with J. Van Mave, the then General Secretary of the Asiatic Society and his addresses as the President from *Asiatic's Journals and Proceedings* which also will enlighten us to uncover some characteristic features of Brahmachari.

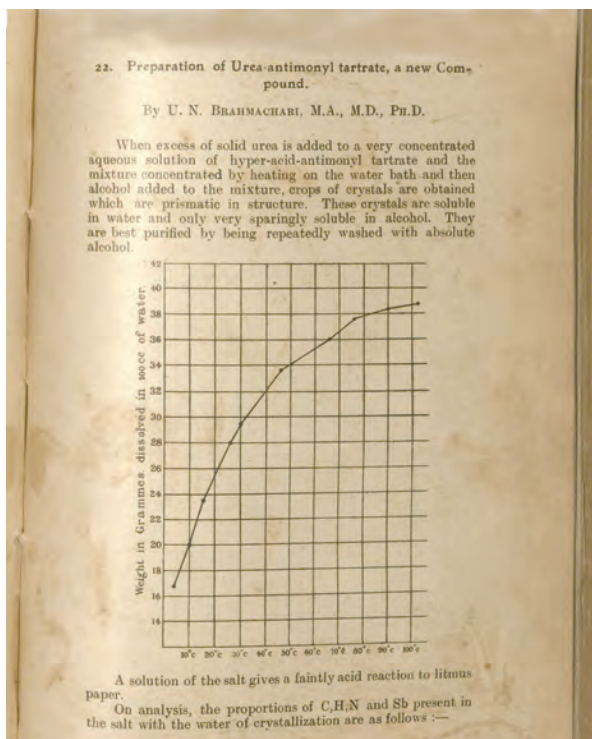
The Asiatic Society of Bengal, now known as The Asiatic Society, Kolkata is a prestigious Research Institute in Asia Since its foundation in 1784. Upendranath Brahmachari was a Fellow of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and had presented several papers on his research findings to the Society for the first time. These publications brought a wide recognitions and he was awarded several donors for his contributions to Medical Science. Some of the articles published in the *Journals* from 1926 to 1930.

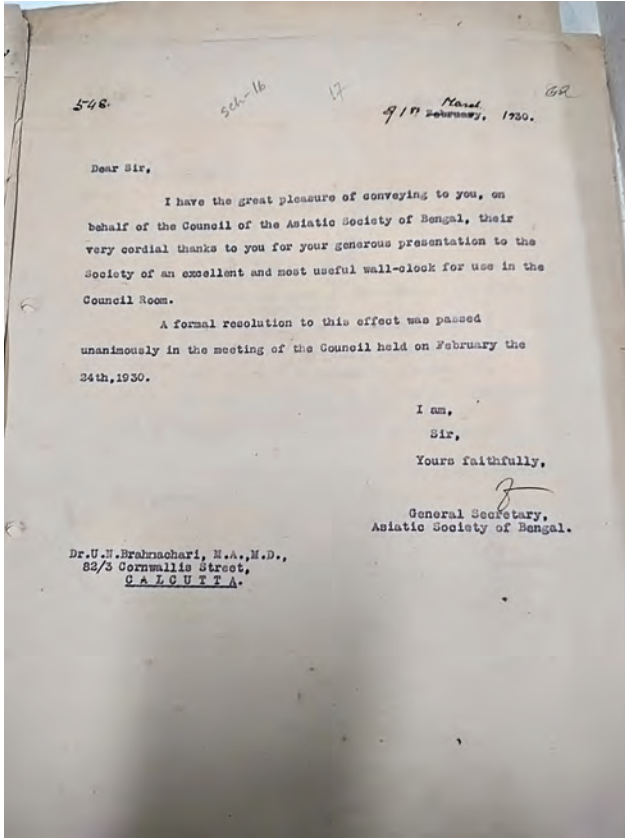
- Brahmachari (U.N.): Preparation of Urea-antimonyl tartrate, a new compound, JL-1920-NS: XVI:339-340
- Brahmachari (U.N.) and Brahmachari (Shyama Charan): Two Neolithic stone implements found in tank at Jamalpur (Monghyr) (Pl. IV.V.), JL-1926-NS: XXII: 135
- Brahmachari (U.N.) and Das Gupta (J.M.):
 - a. A contribution to the chemistry of certain new aromatic antimonials, JL-1929-NS: XXV: 301-306
 - b. Synthesis of a few antimonials of therapeutic interest, JL-1930-NS: XXVI: 413-417

Upendranath Brahmachari read a paper in the Asiatic Society on 12th April 1911 'On the Nature of the epidemic Fever in Lower Bengal Commonly known as Burdwan Fever (1854-75)'. At this time he was the Professor Doctor of Campbell Medical School and a member of the Bengal Regional Malaria Committee.

It is known from a letter dated 25th February 1912 from 10, Nimtala Ghat Street, he writes to the General Secretary of Asiatic Society of Bengal that he intends to read a paper in the General Meeting on "The Alkabalid principles and therapeutic properties of "Dhanmarua or Chat-Chanda".

His paper on 'Preparation of Urea-antimony tartrate, a new compound' published in the *Journal and Proceedings* of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. New series, Vol. XVI brought a revolution as





Sir J. V. Menon, the then General Secretary of the Society made a correspondence with Dr. U. N. Brahmachari through a letter dated 1st March 1930

the first Indian to produce pharmaceutical drugs based on Western technique [Ref. Upendranath Brahmachari – A pioneer of tropical disease : *A Summary of His Discoveries and Scientific Works* by Rajindar Singh Jan, 2013, Oldenburgh.

From 1928-29 Upendranath Brahmachari became the President of The Asiatic Society of Bengal. In his Annual address he expressed his support for increasing membership fees and also he sought sponsorship from various departments and Government Institutions for the development of the Society. From the Chair of the President he expressed his thought that in those

days of political awakening in India, the Society has nothing to do with politics. Instead the Europeans and the Indians should meet on a common intellectual platform, where they can exchange thoughts and ideas in the pursuit of knowledge and the Asiatic Society is ideal for this purpose. He also asked the support of the public spirit of the rich aristocrats of Bengal to raise a sense of duty towards the Society, which is relevant till date.

During the tenure of office as President, Dr. Brahmachari instituted a gold medal in honour of the founder - Sir William Jones. He has contributed handsomely to the Library Endowment Fund and very materially assisted to increase the number of the members.

In a letter dated 26th January 1928 J. V. Manen acknowledged and congratulated him for his generous presentation of his latest work on 'Kala-Azar' to the Society's library. Manen also conveyed the Council's appreciation towards Brahmachari's generosity in making the preparation and the high learning of which his work is an evidence.

One interesting fact is that Upendranath wanted to offer serving light refreshments to the members at the general meetings and provided a set of crockeries and other materials for the purpose. It is known from another letter where Manen suggests that if Council

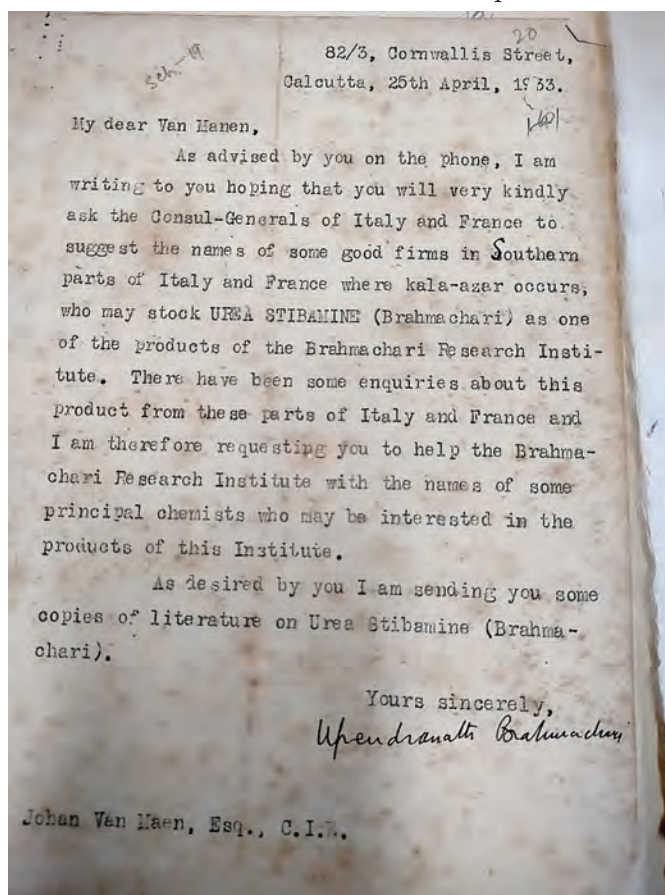
accepts Brahmachari's offer; then tea may be served at the retiring room, downstairs within 5pm–5.30pm and the refreshments should not be served at the meeting room. Another interesting information is known from a letter dated 18th March 1930 that Upendranath Brahmachari gifted an excellent and most useful wall clock for use in the Council room. On behalf of the Council, General Secretary conveyed thanks to him. Not only Dr. Brahmachari but the Council in 1928 also conveyed thanks to Mrs. Brahmachari for a generous donation of rupees 600 to the Library Endowment Fund of the Society.

One of the important fact comes out from the correspondence with Van Manen in April 25th 1933 where Dr. Brahmachari requests him to ask the Consul General of Italy and France to suggest the name of some good firms in southern parts of Italy and France to stock urea-stibamine (Brahmachari) as one of the products of the Brahmachari Research Institute. He also informs him that there were some queries about the medicine from those parts of the said countries and if Manen desires he can send the literature about urea-stibamine.

Upendranath was conferred a Knighthood by the British Government (*London Gazette*, 1st June 1934). In a letter dated

5th September 1930, Manen intimates him that Society has resolved to organise an intimate function to celebrate the auspicious and happy event of the reception of the dignity of Knighthood. Also he requests him to give a suitable time and his choice of invitation to the Members and also non-Members for first instance.

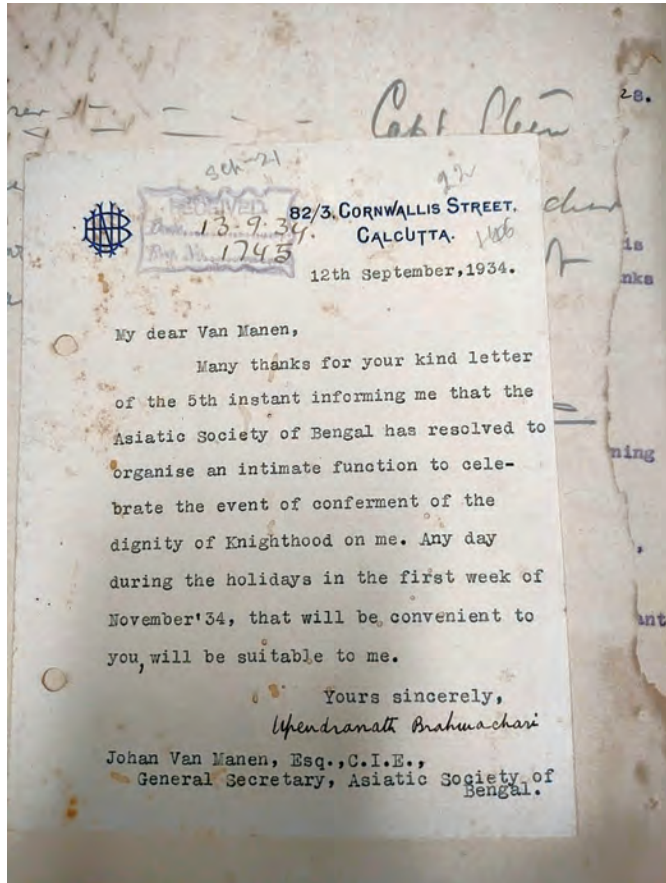
In response, Brahmachari informs Manen that he is thankful for celebrating the event of conferring 'Knighthood' title bestowed on him. He suggests that any date during the holidays in the 1st week of November 1934 will be convenient for him [Letter dated 12th September 1934].



A correspondence between Dr. U. N. Brahmachari and Sir J. V. Menon dated 25th April 1933

In the Annual Address on 4th February 1929 Brahmachari discussed in detail about the personalities and their contribution to the Society. As well as he discussed about the Institutions and their association with Asiatic Society in the field of research in Asia. In his words, "I would ask to tell the world that, in the language of Oriental imagery, within Calcutta is situated this shimmering lake called the Asiatic Society of Bengal, on the surface whose waters, on a white lotus, the Goddess of Learning displays all her splendor. Here the sun of knowledge shines ever joyfully. From this lake torches of learning and research are carried in all directions. From this lake have sprung up many fountains of knowledge in India and beyond the limits of Asia. Over it the wise spirit of Sir William Jones has watched faithfully as the inspiring and guiding genius for nearly a century and a half. May our Society live and prosper and may all who love India love the Asiatic Society of Bengal and honour the memory of the great man who founded it."

From his last Annual Address in 1930 we can get information that the Society has increased yearly income of over 12000 rupees by leasing out portions of Society's land in satisfactory terms. With this he appreciated the policy of contributing



A correspondence between Dr. U. N. Brahmachari and Sir J. V. Menon dated 12th September 1934

10000 rupees in reserve fund adopted by the General Secretary and the Council which in turn will increase the society's permanent annual income up to rupees 5000 in next two years.

He congratulated J.V. Manen for the conferment on him by his majesty the King Emperor of the Title of Honorary Companion of the Indian Empire.

He was worried about the creation of funds for researches in different branches of science and many other activities which are the legitimate and natural concern of the Society.

The most important part of this

address was the elaborate discussion on 'The Treatment of Few Diseases in India in Recent Times'. Here a detail account of symptoms causes Cholera, Malaria, Black Water Fever and Kala-Azar were discussed by Upendranath Brahmachari.

Recently on 28th May 2024 The Society celebrated 150th birth anniversary of U.N. Brahmachari with a half-day seminar where eminent scholars discussed on his life and works. In his memory on 12.12.2024 Science Association of Bengal and India Government Post and Telegraph Department have published a postage stamp.

I would like to conclude this brief article with his great views as he expressed in his annual address on 3rd February 1930: "In dealing with research workers there should be no jealousy no distinction of caste or creed, no differential treatment on the part of those who have the privileged position of recommending sanction of money for research. There should be only one object, namely the well-being of mankind."

Dr. Upendranath Brahmachari has perfectly demonstrated this above mentioned views in his life and till date it is very much relevant.

A 'Lost' Gold Coin Hoard from Western Bengal and its Archaeological Context

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Introduction

The discovery of gold fanam coins in the Bansloi River, near Parkandi village in Birbhum, West Bengal, has opened up a new chapter in the region's archaeological and historical narrative (Figure 1). These coins, attributed to Anantavarman Choḍagaṅga (1078-1147 CE) of the Eastern Gaṅga dynasty, offer insights into early medieval Bengal's economic, cultural, and political milieu (Tandon 2018). The gold fanam coins mark an important discovery for historians and archaeologists.

The region of Birbhum is known for its rich archaeology, with evidence of human habitation dating back from the Paleolithic to the Early Medieval period. The existence of early farming villages using black-and-red ware (BRW) in the southern part of the present district marks the evolution of major rural settlements during the early medieval period (Chakraborti 1993, Chattopadhyay et al. 2007). Birbhum emerged as a hub for early medieval settlements, as evidenced by the discovery of various artefacts, including early medieval ceramics and sculptures.



Figure 1. General view of the findspot of gold fanams at Parkandi (photo: Author).

According to the Siyan stone inscription of Nayapāla (1027-1043 CE) and the Paikar (Paikore) Stone inscription of Chedi King Karna, evidence indicates that this region marks the boundary of the *Rāḍha* country (Sircar 1982a, 1982b). This border emphasises Birbhum's strategic significance as a political and cultural hub, linking it to more extensive regional organisations and early mediaeval trade networks. Specifically, this discovery emphasises how riverine networks help spread Eastern Gaṅga influences and relics. This article builds upon earlier research, particularly the typological and metallurgical analysis of the coins, to present a comprehensive overview of their significance.

Analysis of the Hoard

- i. Name of the hoard: Parkandi, Birbhum
- ii. Year of find: 13 May 2023.
- iii. Publication Reference: Halder, B. 2023. 'Unearthing Parkandi: A Newly Discovered Early Medieval Archaeological Site in Birbhum District, West Bengal'. *Heritage: Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies in Archaeology*, 11(2), 253–285.
- iv. Findspot: Bansloi River, Near Parkandi Village, Murarui, Birbhum District, West Bengal.
- v. Circumstances of discovery: Gold coins were found while digging sand from the dried-up Bansloi River
- vi. Disposition: Coins are presently deposited in the State Archaeological Museum, Kolkata, West Bengal.
- vii. State of preservation: Well-preserved.
- viii. Period covered: The hoard covers around sixty-five years.
[These coins belong to Eastern Gaṅga ruler Anantavarman Choḍagaṅga (1078-1147 CE)]
- ix. Composition of the hoard: Homogeneous.
- x. Average weight and measurement of the 67 gold coins: approximately 380 to 390 mg (Figure 2)

Typological and Metallurgical Analysis

Coins measure between 0.5 to 0.7 cm. in diameter and weight approximately 380 to 390 mg. The purity of the coins, estimated at 92.8% gold, underscores the advanced metallurgical practices of the period. Further studies into the metallurgical techniques employed in minting these coins reveal the remarkable precision of ancient craftsmen. The high gold purity suggests a sophisticated understanding of refining processes. This underscores the advanced state of economic and technological development during Anantavarman's reign (Figure 3).

The obverse features a couchant bull, a motif frequently associated with the Eastern Gaṅga dynasty, surrounded by additional symbols. The reverse bears a stylised representation of the letter *sa*, potentially denoting *samvat* (year), alongside numerical markings believed to represent regnal years. The coins discovered near Parkandi represent four distinct *aṅka* years:

- 64 coins dated to the fifth *aṅka* year
- 1 coin dated to the 62nd or 63rd *aṅka* year
- 1 coin from the 63rd *aṅka* year
- 1 coin from the 71st *aṅka* year

The coins reflect the intricate administrative systems of the Eastern Gaṅga dynasty. The use of the *aṅka* system for denoting regnal years demonstrates the dynasty's unique approach to governance and record-keeping. Unlike conventional calendar years, the *aṅka* years were calculated based on specific criteria set by the rulers, showcasing a distinctive

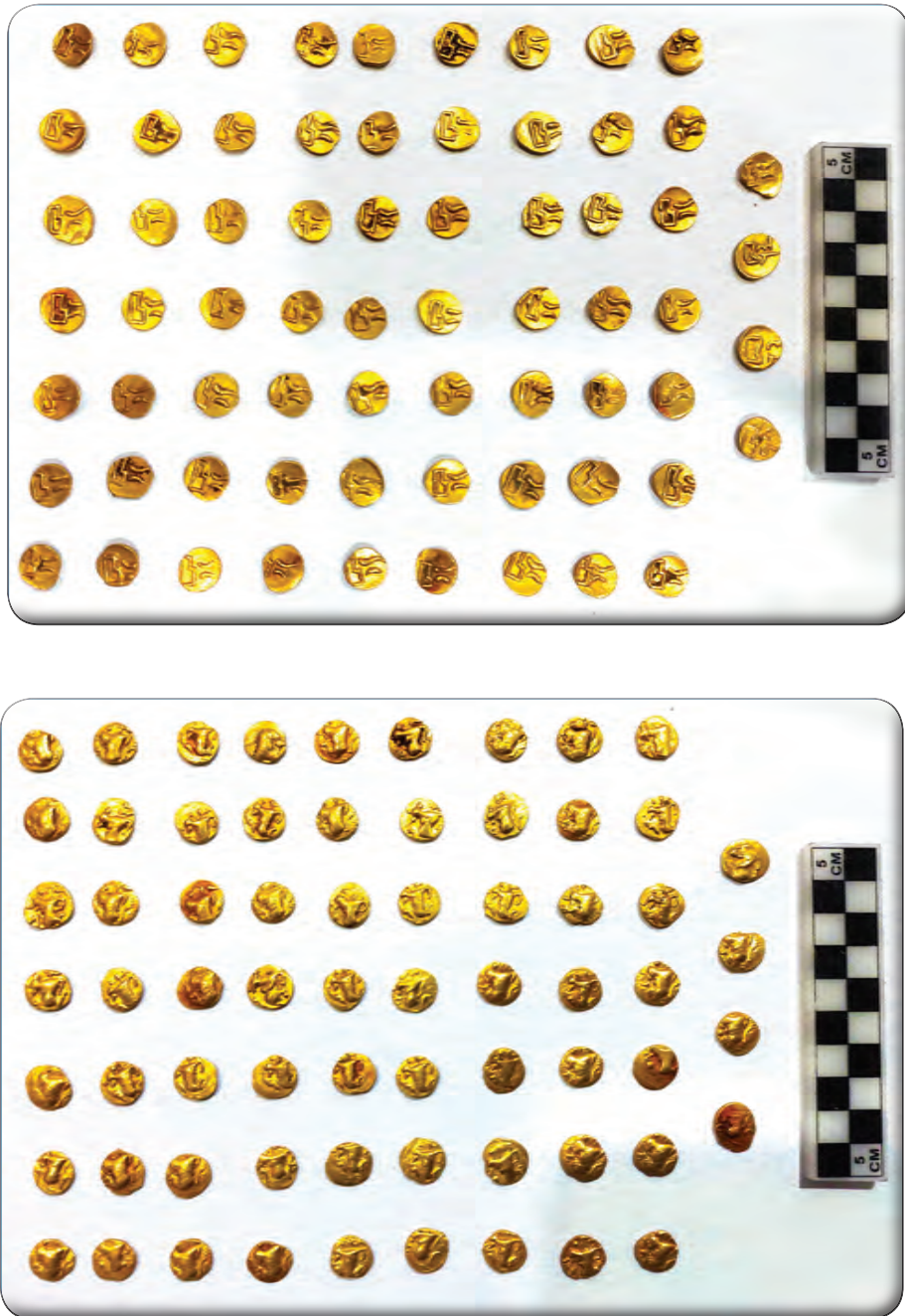


Figure 2. Sixty-seven documented Eastern Gaंगा gold fanam from Parkandi (photo: Rajat Sanyal).



Figure 3. Close-up of the obverse and reverse of three specimens (photo: Rajat Sanyal).

chronological tradition. Pankaj Tandon's research into these coins highlights their value as historical records, offering insights into the regnal spans and chronological innovations of the Eastern Gaṅga rulers (Tandon 2012, 2018).

Numismatic and Symbolic Insights

The couchant bull on the obverse symbolises strength and prosperity, resonating with the political aspirations of the Eastern Gaṅga dynasty. The inclusion of the letter *sa* and numerical markings on the reverse signifies the dynasty's emphasis on structured governance and meticulous record-keeping. As Tandon observes, the absence of excessive

symbolic complexity in these coins—such as the simpler designs on earlier issues—suggests a progression in coinage styles over time (Tandon, 2018).

The gold fanams of Anantavarman Choḍagaṅga are notable for their minimalist design compared to later Eastern Gaṅga issues. For instance, earlier coins typically feature only a couchant bull and regnal date, devoid of additional inscriptions like *śrī rāma*, which appear on coins attributed to later rulers (Tandon 2012). This stylistic simplicity underscores the focus on practicality and the economic value of these coins, reflecting a period of consolidation and expansion under Choḍagaṅga.

The use of gold fanams highlights the dynasty's economic strategies. Their lightweight and small size suggest their utility in everyday transactions, while their high gold content indicates the availability of substantial resources. The coins served both as a medium of exchange and as instruments of royal propaganda, emphasising Anantavarman's authority and prosperity.

Archaeological Context of the Bansloi River Region

The Bansloi River has long been recognised as a vital route in understanding early medieval Bengal settlement and trade dynamics. Parkandi's proximity to this river underscores its importance as a strategic location. Previous archaeological discoveries in Birbhum have suggested that the Bansloi River has played a role in both cultural and commercial interactions throughout the region's long history.

The majority of recorded BRW sites of West Bengal are located west of the Bhagirathi River in well-known historical-geographical regions such as *Uttara-rāḍha*, *Dakshina-rāḍha*, and the *Sumha* region. Based on this, it

can be inferred that these regions maintained their distinct geopolitical identities after the BRW Period. The presence of important early historical cities like Kotasur in Birbhum, Mangalkot in Burdwan, Pakharna and Dihar in Bankura in this area suggests that these historical-geographical regions have proto-historic origins and that most of the locations have been continuously inhabited (Dasgupta 1964; Chanda 1983; Datta 1995; Chakrabarti 1993; Roychowdhury 2002; Roychowdhury and Chatterjee 2011; Sanyal et al. 2016, 2017).

The discovery of artefacts and architectural elements at Parkandi village

as well as in Bansloi river highlights the presence of a developed early medieval settlement. Stone sculptures, including a Cāmuṅḍā image and Broken Viṣṇu image, along with dispersed architectural fragments such as an *āmalaka* and a *praṇāla*, suggest the existence of an early medieval temple (Figure 4). A submerged terracotta well further supports the evidence of human habitation, though its features remain unexplored due to river erosion (Halder 2023).

Pottery findings dominated by Red Ware and supplemented by Black Ware indicate culinary and storage practices



Figure 4. Sculptural and Architectural fragments from the site (photo: Author).

typical of early medieval Bengal. The ceramic assemblage, with shapes like jars, bowls, and *handis*, shows stylistic similarities with findings from Rajbaridanga and Jagjivanpur, suggesting cultural ties across Bengal. Microlithic tools and iron slag from the riverbed further attest to early industrial activity in the region.

The discovery of gold fanam coins adds a new dimension to the study of early medieval trade networks in Bengal. Bengal and Odisha were intertwined at this time, as evidenced by the coins' probable transportation along the river during Anantavarman's wars or through commercial exchanges. The river is a crucial subject of archaeological research because of its navigability and advantageous position, which allowed it to connect Bengal's interior with the Eastern Gaᅅga realms.

Cultural and Economic Interactions

The Eastern Gaᅅga dynasty's invasion of Bengal brought about significant cultural and economic transformations. Anantavarman's campaigns not only extended his political dominion but also facilitated the exchange of ideas and traditions between Odisha and Bengal. The dissemination of Jainism, the incorporation of Orissan architectural motifs in Bankura's temples, and the circulation of gold fanams reflect the multifaceted interactions of this period. This expansion brought about significant cultural and architectural influences, particularly in South Bankura, where Jainism and Brahmanical traditions flourished under Anantavarman's patronage (Chattopadhyay 2010). Tandon's research further underscores the Eastern Gaᅅga control over trade networks and the flow of resources, positioning them as a dominant force in early medieval eastern India (Tandon 2012, 2018).

Implications

From an archaeological perspective, the coins' discovery highlights the importance of riverine contexts in understanding ancient trade and settlement patterns. The Bansloi River likely served as a crucial artery for trade and communication during the early medieval period, linking Birbhum with other regions under Eastern Gaᅅga influence. The coins may have been transported along this route, either as part of trade exchanges or during military campaigns.

The socio-economic significance of the coins is equally noteworthy. Gold fanams were not merely currency; they were also symbols of royal authority and economic stability. Their circulation across regions underscores the interconnectedness of early medieval polities and highlights the role of currency in facilitating these interactions. The Parkandi coins, in this context, serve as a microcosm of the broader economic and political networks that defined early medieval eastern India.

Anantavarman Choᅅagaᅅga's reign is pivotal in the history of eastern India. His patronage of Jainism led to the establishment of numerous Jain temples in South Bankura, while his respect for Brahmins facilitated cultural exchanges between Odisha and Bengal. Scholars like Rupendra Kumar Chattopadhyay have documented the Orissan influence on Bankura's temple architecture and socio-cultural structures, emphasising the dynasty's lasting legacy in the region.

From a numismatic perspective, the coins contribute to our understanding of early medieval monetary systems. Their small size and lightweight design reflect the practicalities of everyday transactions, while their intricate motifs and inscriptions underscore their role as instruments of

royal propaganda. By studying these coins, scholars can gain valuable insights into the economic, artistic, and administrative priorities of the Eastern Gaṅga dynasty.

To conclude, the discoveries from the Bansloi riverbed, including microliths, tools, and gold fanam coins, reveal Parkandi's prominence as a prosperous early medieval settlement. Temple remains and sculptures from the Pala-Sena era are examples of artefacts that demonstrate to the region's cultural and economic conditions. Birbhum's strategic location acted as a buffer zone, connecting Orissa and South Bengal making it a vital area for trade and political control. Continuous habitation from the Paleolithic to the early medieval period highlights the adaptability of ancient communities amid environmental challenges. The gold fanam coins of Anantavarman indicates Bengal's ties with the Eastern Gaṅga dynasty and its integration into broader trade and cultural networks. These findings enrich our understanding of early medieval Bengal and emphasise the importance of further research in this historically significant region.

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Professor Aniruddha Ray Memorial Lecture

The Asiatic Society, Kolkata in collaboration with Paschimbanga Itihas Samsad has organised 'Professor Aniruddha Ray Memorial Lecture' to commemorate the legacy of Professor Aniruddha Ray, an eminent historian of Mughal India and medieval Bengal on 23rd December 2024 at 04:00 p.m. at Vidyasagar Hall of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata. The programme was inaugurated with the garlanding of the bust of Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar by Lieutenant Colonel Anant Sinha, Administrator of the Society. Professor Arun Bandopadhyay, President of Paschimbanga Itihas Samsad paid homage to the esteemed historian as he garlanded the portrait of Professor Ray. Welcome Address was delivered by Professor Ashis Kumar Das, Secretary of Paschimbanga Itihas Samsad. The Administrator of the Society spoke eloquently on the exemplary contributions of Professor Ray to the field of Indian history & its impact on contemporary thought. Professor Suchetana Chattopadhyay, Department of History, Jadavpur University shared her invaluable insights on the theme of the programme entitled as 'প্রথম মহাযুদ্ধকালীন প্রতিদিনের কলকাতা'। The Presidential Address was delivered by Professor Bandopadhyay.



L to R : Lieutenant Colonel Anant Sinha, Professor Arun Bandopadhyay and Professor Suchetana Chattopadhyay

The Asiatic Society in the 3rd Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray Smarak Vigyan Mela O Pradarshani

The Asiatic Society unlike previous years participated with an exhibition in the 3rd Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray Smarak Vigyan Mela O Pradarshani held from 26th -29th December 2024 at the West Bengal University of Animal & Fishery Sciences (WBUAFS), Belgachia. This year the Science fair was organised simultaneously with 18th All India People's Science Congress. Students from various schools and colleges, universities, many entrepreneurs, government institutions participated with their exhibits and various science related models.

The exhibition organised by the Museum Section of the Society comprises display of the panels containing photographic reproductions of some manuscripts on various branches of Science in different languages and scripts, photocopies of some of the archival documents through standees etc. Spiral bounds containing photocopies of some selected and important manuscripts on Mathematics, Anatomy, Alchemy, Physical Science etc., few Bulletins of the Society, Publication Catalogues were also showcased for the visitors.



Visitors at the Stall of the Society

in the inaugural programme of the fair on 26.12.2024 and visit the stall of the Society applauded the efforts of the Museum officials for organising this type of exhibition within a very short time. Each day, a good number of students, local citizens, many eminent personalities visited the stall of the Society and appreciated the exhibition. Officials from the Museum Section were present every day in the stall of the Society to guide the Exhibition and explain the visitors. The participation of the Society in this kind of fair will not only spread the importance and sublimity of the Society but also make the people acquainted with the treasures of it.



Lieutenant Colonel Anant Sinha, Administrator of The Asiatic Society with other Staff Members at the Stall of the Society on the 1st day of the Science Fair

Two-Day Seminar on 'Ancient Veda-Vedanta Solutions to Modern Problems of Environment and Disaster Management'

Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational and Research Institute (RKMVERI), Belur Math (Deemed to be University as declared by the Govt. of India under UGC Act) has organised Two-Day collaborative Seminar on 'Ancient Veda-Vedanta Solutions to Modern Problems of Environment and Disaster Management' in association with The Asiatic Society & Vedanta Bharati, Mysuru from 27th to 28th December 2024 at 9:30 a.m. at the Abhedananda Convention Centre, Belur Math. The inaugural session of the programme commenced with an invocation given by the revered monks of RKMVERI headed by Swami Japasiddhananda, Assistant Professor, Department of Sanskrit and Philosophy. Welcome Address was delivered by Swami Atmapriyanandaji Maharaj, Pro-Chancellor & Secretary, RKMVERI. Swami Bhajanandaji Maharaj, most revered Vice-President of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math and Shankara Bharathi Swamiji, Head of Yedathore Sri Yoganandeshwara Saraswathi Math, Mysuru & Chairman cum Trustee of Vedanta Bharati, Mysuru, Karnataka delivered their respective addresses of benediction to the audience. Lieutenant Colonel Anant Sinha, Administrator of the Asiatic Society addressed a comprehensive lecture, cum presentation session on 'Disaster Management and National Defence' whereas Dr. P.G. Dhar Chakrabarti, IAS (Retd.), Swami Vivekananda Chair Professor & Head, Department of Environment and Disaster Management, RKMVERI and Former Secretary, National Disaster Management Authority delivered an engrossing lecture cum presentation session on 'Environment and Disaster Management —Modern Global Scenario'.

The theme of the first technical session was "One Health' — Soil-Plant-Animal-Human.' Speakers of the session were Dr. H. Sudarshan, Founder, Karuna Trust and Vivekananda Girijana Kalyana Kendra and Dr. Paromita Roy, Assistant Professor & Swami Abhedananda Chair, Department of Sanskrit and Philosophy, RKMVERI.

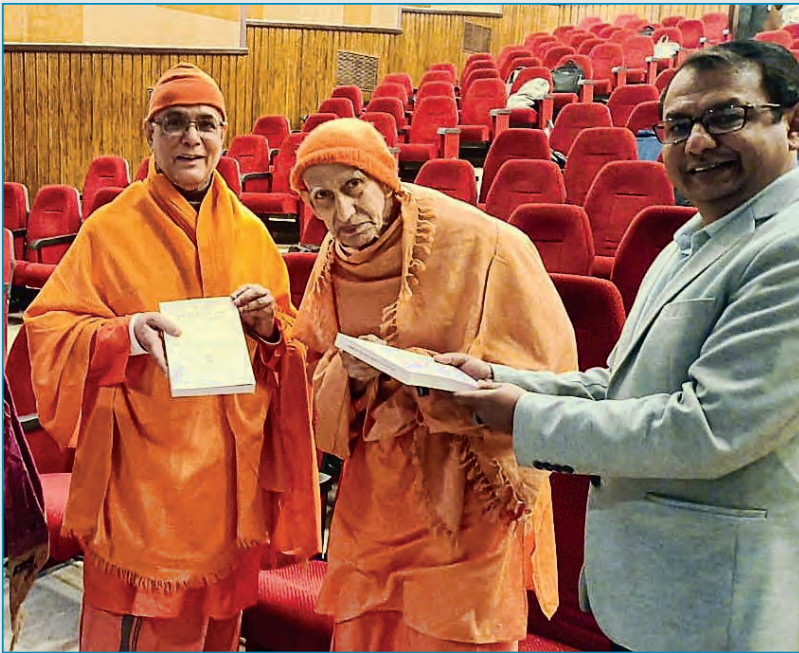
The theme of the final technical session of the opening day of the programme was 'Soil, Plant and Earth — Problems and Challenges: Modern and Ancient Perspectives'. Dr. Sudipta Tripathi, Assistant Professor, School of Environment and Disaster Management, RKMVERI; Dr. Gautam Chatterjee, Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Biotechnology, RKMVERI; and Swami Japasiddhananda were the speakers of the session.

Second day of the programme began with the third technical session titled 'Forest, Wildlife and Creation: Modern and Ancient Perspectives'. Speakers of the session were Shri Neellohit Banerjee, Press and Communications Officer, Wildlife SOS, New Delhi and Swami Kaleshanandaji Maharaj, Registrar, RKMVERI.

The theme of the fourth technical session was 'Creation — Origin of the Disaster! Mystery or Master Plan?' Professor (Dr.) Abhijit Chakrabarti, School of Biological Sciences, RKMVERI; Professor (Dr.) Debashis Majumder, Department of Physics, RKMVERI; and Professor (Dr.) Rakesh Das, Head, Department of Sanskrit and Philosophy, RKMVERI were the speakers.

The fifth & final technical session was entitled 'Sustainable Practices, Disaster Resilience & Environmental Ethics — Scientific and Ancient Veda-Vedantic Perspectives'. Professor Vivekananda D., Emeritus Professor, IIT Bombay was the speaker. A panel discussion featuring all the revered speakers moderated by Swami Atmapriyanandaji Maharaj was also convened.

The Valedictory Address was delivered by Professor T. G. Sitharam, Hon'ble Chairman, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Ministry of Education, Government of India following which Shankara Bharati Swamiji & Swami Bhajananandaji Maharaj delivered their enlightening addresses of benediction to the audience. The entire programme concluded on a high note with concluding remarks given by the revered Swami Suviranandaji Maharaj, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission & Chancellor, RKMVERI, Belur Math and a formal Vote of Thanks delivered by the Swami Sarvottamanandaji Maharaj, Vice-Chancellor, RKMVERI.



Lieutenant Colonel Anant Sinha presenting the Special Issue of the *Journal of The Asiatic Society* on James Prinsep to Swami Atmapriyanandaji Maharaj and Swami Bhajananandaji Maharaj on the occasion.

Professor Sabyasachi Bhattacharya Memorial Lecture

The Asiatic Society in collaboration with Paschimbanga Itihas Samsad has organised 'Professor Sabyasachi Bhattacharya Memorial Lecture' to commemorate the legacy of Professor Bhattacharya, an eminent scholar of Modern Indian History on 3rd January 2025 at 03:30 p.m. at the Vidyasagar Hall of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata. Professor Sukanta Chaudhuri, Professor Emeritus of English at Jadavpur University delivered an engrossing lecture on the theme 'কবির চোখে ইতিহাস: রবীন্দ্রনাথের শেষ পর্যায়ের কাব্য'। Welcome Address was delivered by Professor Ashis Kumar Das, Secretary of Paschimbanga Itihas Samsad. Lieutenant Colonel Anant Sinha, Administrator of the Society spoke on the exemplary contributions of Professor Bhattacharya to the field of Modern Indian History & its impact on contemporary thought. The Presidential Address was delivered by Professor Arun Bandopadhyay, President of Paschimbanga Itihas Samsad.



L to R : Lieutenant Colonel Anant Sinha, Professor Arun Bandopadhyay and Professor Sukanta Chaudhuri





Observance of 242nd Foundation Day of The Asiatic Society



Lieutenant Colonel Anant Sinha, Administrator placing wreath at the Tomb of Sir William Jones.



Lieutenant Colonel Anant Sinha, Administrator hoisting flag at the premises of the Society.



Dr. T. C. A. Raghavan, Former Indian High Commissioner to Singapore & Pakistan and former Director General, Indian Council of World Affairs delivering the Foundation Day Oration on 'South Asia : Today and Tomorrow' in presence of Lieutenant Colonel Anant Sinha, Administrator and Chief Guest Swami Atmapriyananda, Pro-Chancellor, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational and Research Institute.



Distinguished Audience at the Foundation Day Celebration.

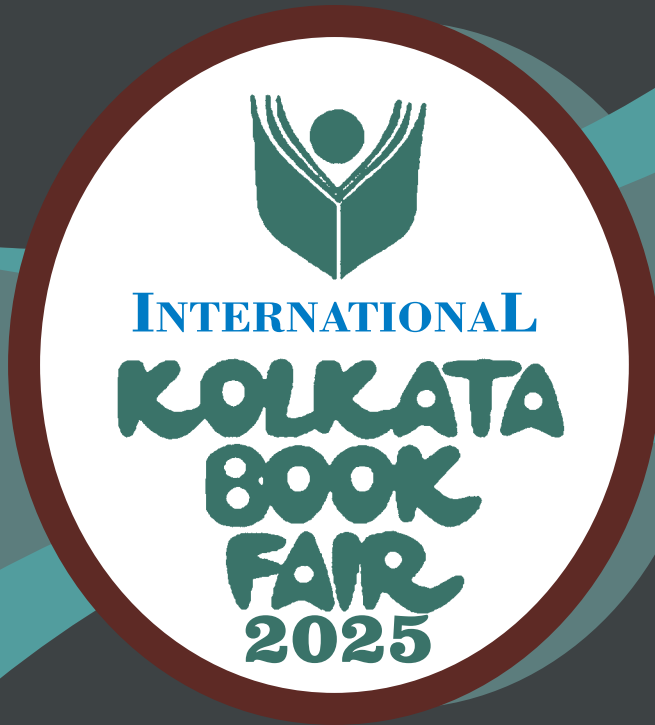




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