

A Unique Early Coin of the Manikya Dynasty of Tripura

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From the numismatic point of view coins of Tripura are more interesting than any coin of the North Eastern States of India, because it gives detailed information about the reign, dating, icon and important events of the time. Besides, the design and script of the coins of Tripura are also more developed. So far as it is known, 'Ratna Fa', who subsequently took 'Manikya' title from one of the Sultans of Bengal, was the first issuer of coins in Tripura. In issuing coins Ratna Manikya was influenced by Raja Ganesh i.e. Danujmardana Deva (1417-18 A. D), Mahendra Deva (1418-19 A. D), Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah (Jadu, 1418-33 A. D.), Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah and Rukanuddin Barbak Shah (1455-76 A. D) of Bengal in respect of lion-type coinage, legend, fabrics and design.

We intend to discuss in this paper a unique coin of Ratna Manikya. The legends are as follows :

Obverse : The coin was devoted to his worshiped deities, Parvati and Paramesvara and within ornamental circle lining four line legend.

1. Parvati Pa
2. Rameswara Cha
3. Rana Parou
4. 1386.

Reverse : Within double lining border, four line legend in Sanskrit language in Bengali script.

1. Sri Lakshmi (one star mark at the corner)
2. Mahadevi
3. Sri Sri Ratna
4. Manikou.

This is an important and unique coin of the Manikya dynasty of Tripura. The date must be read as Saka Era be-

cause in other coins of Ratna Manikya Saka Era is clearly mentioned.

The coin struck by : First Ratna Manikya of Tripura.

In the year	: Saka 1386 i.e. 1464-65 A. D.
Metal	: Silver
Denomination	: One Rupee
Weight	: 10.5 Grams
Measurement	: 26 c. m. in diameter
Shape	: Round

The coin under discussion is in the collection of the present author.

The remarkable aspect of the coin is that the king placed his queen's name before his name. This is undoubtedly a rare example in the numismatic history of Tripura as well as of India. In no other coin of Tripura, queen's name is found before the name of the king. Generally almost in every coin, kings used their queen's name after them unlike Muslim coins. However, this may be explained in this way

- First, - King Ratna might have used his beloved queen's name at the top of the coin out of deep love to her.
- Second, - It was a whimsical issue or the king might have placed his queen's name Laxmi before his name only for her satisfaction ;
- Third, - This might be an indication of the matriarchal form of society of ancient Tripura

Though the first explanation cannot perhaps be denied, we have no opinion about the second explanation. So let us discuss the third point :

Among many Tribes of North Eastern States matriarchal forms of society exist. The kings of Tripura belong to the 'Tipra' tribe of Mongoloid group. Though at present it is difficult to trace specific example of matriarchal form of society in Tripura, yet specially in "Tipra" group, the women are not given to-day a status lower than in a Bengali Hindu family.

It is evident from the 'Rajamala' (the history of the kings of Tripura) that from the mid-fifteenth century A. D. the Bengali social customs and Hinduism vigorously influenced the

kings and tribal people of Tripura. King Ratna brought so many Bengali Hindu families and gave them settlement in the soil of Tripura. He was also influenced by the Hindu social customs and he himself was the patron of Hinduism. The coin under discussion is the finest example of the above point on which we see the Brahminical influence. It is also known from the 'Rajamala' that in addition to Ratna Manikya, king Dhanya Manikya (1490-1513 A. D) also took a remarkable part in assimilating tribal religious culture with the Hindu religious culture in Tripura.

Ratna Manikya struck only one coin on the same date on the tribal Gods and Goddesses, "Chaturddasa Devatas", but in no other coin the name of tribal deity is available. So it is evident from the coin that tribal religions and culture gradually disappeared from the Royal family since Ratna Manikya. Further, after Ratna we do not see even a single tribal name of any king or queen except 'Machhatri Devi,' wife of Mukut Manikya Deva (1489 A. D). It may be relevant to mention here that normally the people or the subject always follow their king in every respect.

This coin might be the result of the matriarchal form of society, directly or indirectly, which was not totally absent in Tripura in the past, although it gradually disappeared due to the influence of Brahmanical culture and civilization.