

A SOURCE BOOK  
OF THE  
MUSEUMISMATIC STUDIES  
IN  
NORTH EAST INDIA



DIRECTORATE OF MUSEUMS ASSAM

A Source Book of the  
Numismatic Studies in North-East India

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# A Source Book Of The Numismatic Studies In North-East India

Vol. II

*Compiled by*  
**R. D. Choudhury**



1987

**DIRECTORATE OF MUSEUMS : ASSAM**  
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*A Source Book of the Numismatic Studies in North-East India, Vol. II,  
Compiled by Dr. R.D. Choudhury, Director of Museums, Assam, Guwa-  
hati, 1987*

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Published by the Directorate of Museums, Assam,  
Guwahati and printed at Simantika printers,  
M.C. Road, Guwahati-3

## PREFACE

*At the time of the 74th Annual Conference of the Numismatic Society of India, it was decided to reprint the old papers on the coinage of North East India. Accordingly, the compilation of the volume progressed. But the number of papers were so much that it was not possible to print all of them before the inaugural day of the conference. Therefore, it was decided to compile the printed papers in two volumes. Thus, the first compiled volume of the work **A Source Book of the Numismatic Studies in North East India** was released in the inaugural ceremony of the N. S.I. Conference.*

*The remaining papers have been reprinted now and compiled in the second volume. In addition to the papers in English, in Assamese also some articles on coins of this region were published. But most of the articles in Assamese are not of original in nature. Hence, only a few selected articles having new information have been included. All the informative articles on coins published in **Orunodoi**, the first Assamese magazine, have been accommodated.*

*The work has been done in the interest of the researchers. We hope, they will be able to utilize the book. If the book is accepted as a source book by the scholars, our effort in bringing out the volume will be considered as useful. In spite of best care taken, there are some printing mistakes for which I tender my apology. I am thankful to Mr. B. K. Malakar, Planning Officer and Mr. Anil Kumar Das of this Directorate for the pain taken by them in bringing out the book. I am also thankful to the staff and the proprietor of the Simantika Printers for printing the book neatly.*

**R.D. Choudhury**

*Director of Museums, Assam  
Guwahati*

5.12.87

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AR.	:	Silver
Arch. S.I.	:	Archaeological Survey of India
A.S.B.	:	Asiatic Society, Bengal
AN.	:	Gold
Cir	:	Circular
D.G. Arch	:	Director General of Archaeology, India
Ex. col.	:	From the collection of
I.M.C.	:	Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta
J.A.R.S.	:	Journal of the Assam Research Society
J.A.S.B.	:	Journal of the Asiatic Society, Bengal
J.N.S.I.	:	Journal of the Numismatic Society of India
L.	:	Lead
I.	:	Left
P.	:	Presented by
Pl.	:	Plate
r.	:	Right
R.Y.	:	Regnal year
S.	:	Size in inches
Sq.	:	Square
W.	:	Weight in grains

## LIST OF PLATES

- I A series of forged coins from  
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**B. B. Hazarika**

## A NOTE ON TWO OLD COINS

Collection of a hoard of old silver coins numbering 29 has been made by the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam, Gauhati, in the year 1965 through the efforts of my predecessor ( Dr. P. C. Choudhury ) in the said Department. These coins were found while digging earth in a village called Kadaligaon, near Barhampur in the District of Nowgong.

\*In this collection there is an important coin which bears legend in Persian script as follows :—

### Obverse

- 1) *As-Sultan al Azim*
- 2) *Shams-ud Duniya Wa'd Din*
- 3) *Abu al Mazaffur Daulat Shah*
- 4) *As Sultan*

Meaning—The great king Shams-ud-Duniya Wa'd did (Pillar of the World and religion) Abul Muzaffar Daulat Shah

### Reverse

- 1) *Al Imam*
- 2) *al mast'asim Amir*
- 3) *ul mu'minin*

Meaning—In the time of religious chief Mustasim, commander of faithful

The legends on obverse are within a single line square but two sides of the square are cut off and the legends on reverse are inscribed in a doubled line square which is again within a circle. The coin is round-shaped, weighing 11 grams and measuring 28 mm in size. The coin is undated and it does not bear the name of the mint-place. There is a wavy line over the word *Imam*.

As the coin is undated and without the mention of the mintplace, the question of identification of the monarch arises.

\* Reading of the legend in Persian has been done by prof. Y. Tamizi of Cotton College, Gauhati-1.

From the appearance of the coin which resembles in toto the style which has been found in coins of Bengal Sultans and Governors who ruled the country under the Delhi Sultans and occasionally independent, and the practice of mentioning the name of Caliph for indicating the time of the issue of the coin, which is also present in this coin, it may be assigned to a mediaeval Muslim ruler of Bengal, Daulat Shah by name. Almost all the mediaeval Muslim rulers of Bengal like Sultans at Delhi followed the practice of mentioning the name of Caliph in their coin as a token of the Caliph's recognition to their authorities. As soon as one assumed power by any means he used to send presents indicating his assumption of power to the Caliph of Bagdad, the highest pontiff of Islam, who in return recognised his authority. Recognition from the Caliph to a particular ruler in India practically stopped opposition, if there was any, to his authority. Sometimes this formal recognition from the Caliph comes even after two or three years since the assumption of the power, but the ruler from the very beginning used to mention in anticipation the name of the Caliph on the reverse of his coins. This practice is found followed in this coin under discussion. As the names of Daulat Shah on obverse and Abbasid Caliph Mustasim on the reverse are very clearly inscribed on the coin and as mention of the name of Mustasim limits the issuing period of the coin to that of the caliphship of Mustasim and as during the period of religious leadership of Mustashim there was in India only one ruler bearing the name Daulat Shah and he was Daulat Shah bin Maudud, so the identification of the issuing monarch of the coin under discussion with Daulat Shah bin Maudud may possibly be made. The discovery of the coin in question, found along with the coins of other Bengal rulers viz Feroz Shah (A.D. 1302-1318), Bahadur Shah (A.D. 1310-1323) and Mubarak Shah (A.D. 1338-1349), also gives weightage to the identification of the issuing potentate of this coin with Daulat Shah bin Maudud of Bengal.

On the death of Bengal Governor Nasiruddin, the son of Delhi Sultan Shams-ud-Din Iltutmish, in the month of May, 1229 A.D. (A.H. 626) the Bengal throne had been usurped by a partisan of Iwaz, Malik Ikhtiyaruddin Balka (the colt) Khilji who ruled in Bengal from Lakshnavati for about one and half years and was dethroned and killed by Iltutmish by the first part of 628 A.H. (Nov., 1230 A.D.). Till the discovery of this coin there was nothing in extant as a token of the reign of this rebel chief except a coin dated 627 A.H. in which he describes himself as '*Daulat Sah bin Maudud*, and which retains the name of *Iltutmish*, the Sultan of Delhi, and herein lies the importance of this coin, being the

second token of the reign of Daulat Shah who expelled the imperialists from Bengal bag and baggage.

Its legend is to some extent different from that of the coin, recorded in the *History of Bengal*<sup>2</sup> as his father's name i.e. 'Maudud' and the name of 'Iltutmish' are not mentioned there. It may be presumed that Daulat Shah issued coins with different legends if not more than two at least. The fact of non-mentioning the name of Sultan Iltutmish gives the idea that immediately after the capture of the throne of Bengal, Daulat Shah issued coins retaining the name of Iltutmish therein as a mark of latter's sovereign authority and most probably few months later, as he ruled the country for eighteen months only, since the issue of his earlier coins Daulat Shah assumed independent status and signalled it by issuing coins without retaining the name of Iltutmish which possibly enraged the later, because the political maxim of the period was that the Delhi Sultan was not to bother about the person who was on the throne of Bengal so long as he (the Delhi Sultan) was in receipt of allegiance as supreme authority from Bengal ruler. But it caused much concern to a Delhi Sultan only when discontinuance of such acknowledgement took place on the part of a Bengal ruler. The resultant consequence was an expedition by Iltutmish against Daulat Shah as stated earlier.

This also gives an idea about the time of issue of the coin under discussion that, it might have been minted in the latter half of the year 627 A.H., as Iltutmish's expedition against Daulat Shah took place in the early part of 628 A.H. It may be said with some degree of certainty that the coin, issued in 627 A.H. in which Daulat Shah described himself as '*Daulat Shah bin Maudud*' and retained the name of *Iltutmish* therein, might have been minted in the early part of the said year when he was yet to assume his independence.

It is also important in other respect also that no reference of any coins of this ruler can be found in Mr. Botham and Mr. Friel's work : '*Supplement to the Catalogue of Provincial Cabinet of Coins, Eastern Bengal and Assam*' nor in the main volume<sup>3</sup> of this Supplement or in Mr. H.N. Wright's '*Coins of Sultans of Delhi and Contemporary Dynasties*' with same legends as found in this coin. A very scanty reference to the coins of this ruler has been made in the *History of Bengal*.<sup>4</sup> It bears great importance in the fact that it opens a new vista in the history and numismatics of Bengal.

The next coin of our discussion is of Shri Bharatha Singha or Bharathi Raja who, the main body of the Moamarias under the religious leadership of one Pitambar Mahājan, was installed at Rangpur in 1791 A.D. and one Sukura was appointed his *Barbaruah*, the Chief Administ-

rator. During the reign of the Ahom king Gaurinath Singha (A.D. 1780-1794), the Moamaria Chief Bharatha Singha could not be fully suppressed though he had been driven eastward from Rangpur by Purnananda Burha-Gohain. But Bharatha Singha maintained his power bravely till 1797 A.D. as his coins issued in that year, are in extant. He was finally suppressed and was killed during the reign of Kamaleswar Singha (A.D. 1795-1810) and with the suppression of Bharatha Singha the uprisings of the Moamarias practically came to an end.

During my recent visit to Śrī Śrī Dinjay Māyāmarā Satra, a famous religious institution which played very very important political role in the history of Assam towards the end of the Ahom rule, I came across one gold coin of Bharatha Singha. The coin has been nicely preserved in the custody of the *Satrādhikār* Śrī Jibanānanda Chandra Goswami of the said Satra. The coin being an octagonal one, weighing 11 grams and measuring 22 mm. bears legend in Assamese scripts on obverse 1) “Śrī Śrī Bhagadatta 2) Kulodbhava Śrī Bha 3) ratha siṃha Nṛpasya 4) Śāke 1718” and on the reverse 1) Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa 2) Caraṇāravinda 3) Makaranda Pramatta 4) Madhu Karasya.” Meaning—(Coin) of king Bharatha Singha of the excellent lineage of Bhagadatta, a bee intoxicated with the nectar of the lotus-like feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śaka 1718 (=1796 A.D). In artistic design the coin resembles those of the Ahom monarchs. The influence of Ahom coins in shape, size, design and weight is found to a great extent in this coin and the legends are also intensely devotional in expression like the Ahom coins. But there is a striking difference in respect of the winged dragon figure which is invariably found either facing right or left on the bottom of any Ahom coin of its size, but such dragon mark is absent in this coin of Śrī Bharatha Singha though Mr. Botham in his work “*Catalogue of Provincial coin Cabinet—Assam*” records one silver coin of the said ruler with the dragon.<sup>5</sup> Bharatha Singha describes himself on his coin as descendant of Bhagadatta, the Assamese hero who took part in the War of Kurukshetra as described in the Mahābhārata, unlike the Ahom ‘Svargadevas’ (i.e. monarchs) who used to describe themselves as descendants of Indra.

The importance of this latter coin lies in the fact that till the tracing out of the present coin in the possession of the said *Satrādhikāra*, it was not known that Bharata Singha minted gold coin at all. Mr. Gait just mentioned that Bharata Singha opened mint, but as regards the metal of the coin, issued by the said king he was silent on this point. In Mr. Botham’s above mentioned work also only a few silver coins of this Moamaria hero are recorded under the group of Ahom coins which may

give one the impression that Bharatha Singha was an Ahom monarch, which was not.

Thus it may be said that these two coins will be of great value to scholars who are interested not only in the history of the periods, but also in Indian numismatics.

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\* Reprinted from the *Souvenir I.C.H.R. Seminar on Archaeology*, 1985.