

## Some Coins of Assam with Mintmark "Di"

Nicholas Rhodes

When Mr. S.K. Bose and I published our book on *The Coinage of Assam*, Vol. II, we were aware of and published, several coins of Gaurinath Simha with the mintmark of the letter "Di".<sup>1</sup> This is presumably short for Dichoi. Near Jorhat, which was Gaurinatha's capital during the last months of his reign.

Since writing the book, several more pieces have appeared with the letter "Di", so the purpose of this article is to place these on record, and to discuss the numismatic evidence in slightly greater detail than we did in the book.

I shall now record the pieces currently known to me, with mintmark "Di". All the coins are of Gaurinatha Simha :-

1. Gold Mohur. Date 1716 Saka. R & B-but say R 14a1. Rev. die same as the silver rupee R58.1 Collection Rhodes.
2. Gold Half Mohur. Undated R & B. R181. Same die as R.78.1 Collection Fitzwilliam Museum.
3. Rupee. Date 1716 Saka. R & B R 58.1 Collection Rhodes.
4. Rupee. Date 1716 Saka. R & B R 58.2. Arc of dots to right of lion. Collection Rhodes.
5. Half Rupee. Undated R & B. R.78.1 Collection Rhodes.
6. Half Rupee. Undated. R & B. R. 78.2. Different Rev. die as R. 86.1, with circle with pellet removed and "di" added. Collection Rhodes.
7. Quarter Rupee. Date 1716 Saka. R & B. - but say R112a.1. "di" below obv., no die links noted. Collection Rhodes.
8. Quarter Rupee. Date 1717 Saka. R & B. R.117.1 "di" on rev. Collection Rhodes.
9. Quarter Rupee. Date 1717 Saka R & B. R.117.2 Obv. Diw linked with R. 116.1, coin without "di". Collection Jhaveri.
10. Quarter Rupee. Date 1717 Saka R & B. R.117.3 With long I in "di". Collection Rhodes.

11. Eighth Rupee. Undated R & B. -, but say R. 125a.1. "di" below obv. No. obv. Die links noted, rev. die noted with normal obv., but not illustrated in R & B. Collection Rhodes.
12. Thirty-second Rupee. Undated R & B. R123.1 "di" on obv. Collection Rhodes.
13. Thirty-second Rupee. Undated R & B.-, but say R123.1a. Same obv. Die as last, with "di", but reverse die of 1/16<sup>th</sup> rupee used in error. Collection Rhodes.

The fact that new varieties are still turning up indicates that it is very likely that further new varieties may turn up in the future, and we can postulate that a sixteenth rupee was almost certainly struck to complete the set.

The conclusion from this survey are that the coins with letter "di" are found dated 1716 and 1717 *Saka* (1794-5 AD), but they represent only a small minority of the coins struck during these years. For the rupees and half rupees we have two dies of each denomination letter "di" out of a total number of around 30-35 relevant dies known of this period, so we can postulate that no more than 5% of production had the mint-mark, and probably rather less.<sup>2</sup> Some of the coins with mintmark are die-linked with other pieces that do not have the mintmark, so either the dies were brought from elsewhere, or coins both with and without the mintmark were struck at Dishoi. Some dies were actually altered, and a mintmark added to the die, which indicates that it was important to have the mintmark on certain dies at certain times.

The most likely explanation seems to be that the main mint, probably located at Rangpur near Sibsagar, continued to operate after Gaurinatha Simha's return to Upper Assam after his period of exile. When Gaurinatha himself left Rangpur, he probably took some mint workers along with his entourage, with sufficient equipment to enable coins to be struck wherever he was located. Special dies, with an appropriate mintmark were preped, either by cutting a new die, or by altering an existing die, so that the coins struck in the "camp Mint" could be identified and checked for weight and fineness. Most coins, however, continued to be struck in the mint at Rngpur. This proposition is still uncertain, but these coins may shed some light on the organization of the Ahom administration in general, and of the mint in particular, during the last years of the reign of Gaurinatha Simha.



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## Notes and References

1. Rhodes & Bose, *op. cit.* p 27.
2. The dies that were altered were only used to strike coins with mintmark for a part of their life, and many unmarked dies are probably unrecorded. Also the dies with mintmark are usually very sharp, indicating that the dies were not used until they broke up. Finally the actual proportion of specimens with mintmark may not be much more than 1 % among surviving specimens of Gaurinatha Simha, although that figure is not based on examination of unbiased samples.