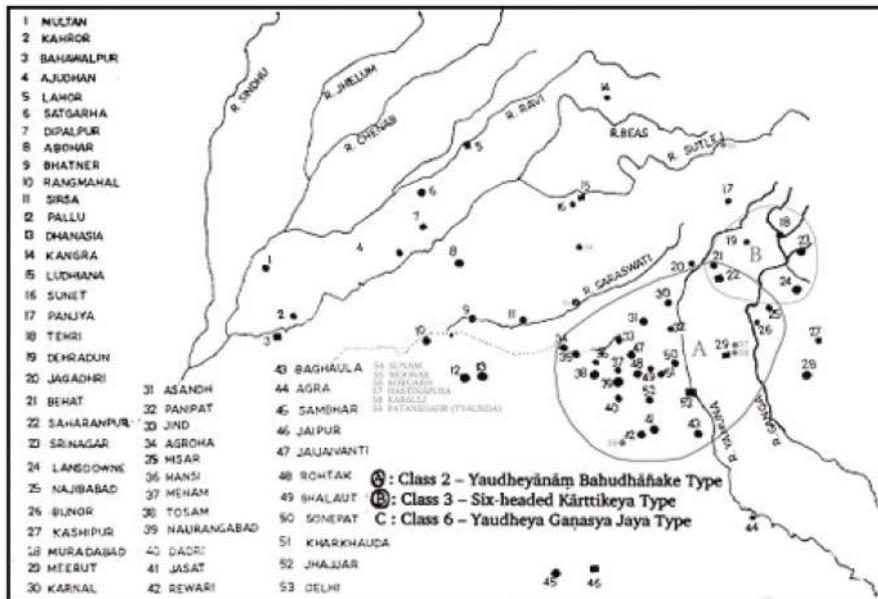


Orthographical Peculiarities of Yaudheya and Some Other Tribal Coins

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The Yaudheyas are well known to the numismatists for having issued the largest number of species of coins of different types over nearly half a millennium, from about the second century BCE to about the middle of the fourth century CE, with an interregnum of Scythian-Kushan supremacy during the first-second century CE. Besides a unique gold coin struck on the Kushan module (in a private collection) showing hex-cephalic Kārttikeya with a long legend in Brāhmī on the obverse and Gaja-Lakṣmī standing on a lotus with some subsidiary symbols on the reverse and a slightly damaged silver coin preserved in the British Museum depicting six-headed Kārttikeya holding a lance in his right hand with the Brāhmī legend *Bhagavata-svāmino Brahmaṇya Yaudheya* (भगवत स्वामिनो ब्रह्मण्य यौधेय) on the obverse and six-headed Ṣaṣṭhī standing on a lotus with undulating line below flanked by six-arched parasoled symbol surmounted by a *nandipada* on her right and four-branched railed tree on her left in a dotted border on the reverse, the Yaudheyas issued copper coins of various types in the regions they occupied in different phases of their historical existence. After the disintegration of the Maurya and Śuṅga empires, they seem to have been located at and around Rohtak in Haryana with their area of influence extending to northeastern Rajasthan touching Narnaul district in the southwest and Bijnore district of Uttar Pradesh in the northeast as indicated by their coin-finds showing a bull with railed Śūlagava (sometimes without it) and the Brāhmī legend *Yaudheyānām Bahudhāṅake* (यौधेयानां बहुधाङके) along the margin above and below the bull on the obverse and the reverse carrying the figure of an elephant with a *nandipada* and banner-like symbol at its back. There are quite some variations in the known specimens. Under the Scytho-Kushan pressure, the Yaudheyas had to leave their original home and find safer refuge in the Garhwal region where they seem to have dedicated their state to their

tutulary deity Kārttikeya striking their copper coins showing his effigy and bearing the Brāhmī legend *Bhagavata-svāmīno Brahmanyadevasa Kumārāsa* (भगवत् स्वामिनो ब्रह्मण्यदेवस कुमारस), sometimes shortened without the last word. The reverse depicted his spouse six-headed Śaṣṭhī with subsidiary symbols. These coins are generally rudely struck and show many variations. Their regime seems to have touched and perhaps occupied some area where Kuṇinda coins were the popular currency. They had thus issued coins copying the Kuṇinda symbols of deer standing facing a female holding a lotus in her upraised right hand, generally identified as Lakṣmī. Perhaps later, the goddess was substituted by a deer and/or temple. Generally it is on the cumulative evidence that the legend can be restored as a marked degradation took place in striking these coins. There are numerous variations in the figures of the goddess and the temple types resulting into a large number of varieties of these coins. Variation in weights is also large and fractions too may have been struck. And finally when they were instrumental along with some other factors perhaps to force the Kushans out of their native region they descended to the plains and occupied not only their original territory but also a very large area comprising parts of the present day western U.P., Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, southern Punjab (in present day India and Pakistan), Bahawalpur, and northern Rajasthan as shown in the map given below:



Map showing the distribution of Yaudheya coins

From the viewpoint of orthography, it is the legends of their coins which interest us here. Their earliest coins of bull-elephant type, as noted above, show *Yaudheyānām Bahudhāñake* (sometimes with indistinct or truncated vowel marks) as the commonest legend with palatal nasal used for the conjunct of dental nasal with first semivowel, i.e. *Yaudheyānām Bahudhāñake* (यौधेयानाँ बहुधाञके) used for *Yaudheyānām Bahudhānyake* (यौधेयानाँ बहुधान्यके) :



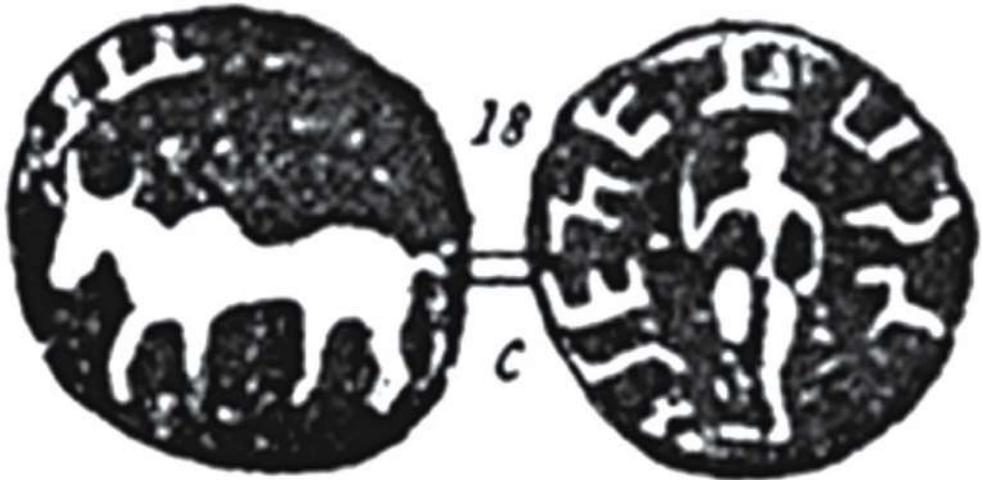
Another class of coins carries the legend *Bhagavata-svāmino Brahmanyadevasa Kumārāsa* (भगवत स्वामिनो ब्रह्मण्यदेवस कुमारस) or a shorter version thereof. The legends are seldom found complete on individual examples and have been reconstructed on the cumulative evidence of the coins of the particular type. It is the word *Brahmanya* on these coins which betray anomalous spellings like *Brahmañā*, *Brahmañya*, *Brahmanya* (ब्रह्मञ, ब्रह्मञ्य, ब्रह्मञ्य) and *Brahmanya* (ब्रह्मण्य) :





These different types of orthography reveals that the Yaudheyas pronounced the words like *Bahudāhānyaka* and *Brahmaṇya* in different ways or did not distinguish the *ñā*, *ñya*, *nya* (ञ, ञ्य, न्य) and *ṇya* (ण्य) sounds. Another question arises here whether these different spellings were used in different regions or at different times. We have noted above that during second-first century BCE the bull-elephant type coins were used at Rohtak and the area around and it was the nucleus region of their settlement. No distinction was made here between *ñā* (ञ) and *nya* (न्य) at that period. They used the Kārttikeya-Ṣaṣṭhī and Kārttikeya-deer type coins when they moved to the hill region of Garhwal during first-second century CE. Even here they spelled the word *Brahmaṇya* differently as *Brahmaña*, *Brahmaṇya*, *Brahmaṇya* (ब्रह्मञ, ब्रह्मञ्य, ब्रह्मन्य) as noted above. So it is clear that they not only made any difference between *ñā* and *nya* (ञ and न्य) but also confused the sound with *ñya* and *ṇya* (ञ्य and ण्य).

That *ñā* and *nya* (ञ and न्य) were not distinguished during this period is revealed by Rājanya coins also which circulated mostly north of the Satluj river in old Hoshiarpur district which now comprises of Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar district also. These coins also spell the word *Rājanya Janapadasa* (राजन्य जनपदस) as *Rājaña Janapadasa* (राजञ जनपदस):



The Vṛṣṇi silver coins too spells the word *Rājanya gaṇasya* (राजन्य गणस्य) as *Rājajña gaṇasya* (राजज्ज/ज्ञ गणस्य) indicating further that *nya* (न्य) was confused as *jña* (ज्ज/ज्ञ).



The use of *ña* (ज) for *jña* (ज्ज/ज्ञ) may also be seen in the titles prefixed to the names of Bhānumita and Mahimita of the Mitra rulers of Punjab: *Raño Bhānumitasa* (रजो भानुमितस) and *Raño Mahimitasa* (रजो महिमितस) as well as in the legends on Audumbara and Kuṇinda coins, e.g. *Mahādevasa raño Dharaghoṣasa Odubarisa* (महादेवस रजो धरघोषस ओदुबरिस) and *Raña Kuṇi(ṃ)dasa Amoghabhutisa mahārājasa* (रज कुण्णैदस अमोघभुतिस महाराजस).





Not only the tribal and some other north Indian states were using *Raṇa/Raño* (रज/रजो) as the regal title but also the Sātavāhana and some other rulers in central and south India were doing so.



The use of *Raṅa/Raṅo* (रञ/रञो) for *Rājñah/Rājño* (राज्ञः/राज्ञो) was thus the result of the use of Prakrit in that period which prevailed almost in the whole of the sub-continent. But the indiscriminate use of *ṅa* (ञ), *ṅya* (ञ्य) and *nya* (न्य) for *ṅya* (ण्य) by the Yaudheyas and *ṅa* (ञ) for *nya* (न्य) by the Rājanyas, *jñā* (ज्ज/ज्ञ) for *nya* (न्य) by the Vṛṣṇis is a peculiar orthographic feature of the tribal coins of north India coming mainly from the ancient Punjab (which comprised part of Himachal Pradesh, the whole of the present Punjab and Haryana) along with some adjoining parts of Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. All the tribes including the Mitras and except the Yaudheyas were issuing bscriptual coins with Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī legends. The Yaudheyas were living in close proximity to these tribes and were in all probability belonged to the same socio-cultural zone and were impacted by Prakrit language and Kharoṣṭhī orthography. When the Kharoṣṭhī disappeared from this region after third century CE probably with the exit of the Imperial Kushans this confusion also vanished and the Brāhmī legends and inscriptions show the use of appropriate alphabets and conjuncts for relevant sounds.

The peculiar orthographic feature of the use of *ṅa*, *ṅya*, *nya* (ञ, ञ्य, न्य) for *ṅya* (ण्य) by the Yaudheyas is interesting and calls for explanation. Does it indicate different regional pronunciations or a successive temporal difference towards Sanskritization? Since the exact provenances of the coins showing the use of *ṅa*, *ṅya*, *nya* (ञ, ञ्य, न्य) for *ṅya* (ण्य) are not definitely known, it is very difficult to be sure of regional pronunciations within the small territory occupied by the tribe in Garhwal region. Does the use of these different sounds betray temporal progress then? It is equally difficult to be affirmative even on this point. I think that the Yaudheyas (and of course other tribes and states) were coming out of the shackles of the use of Prakrit and Kharoṣṭhī and stepping towards Sanskritization and adjusting the pronunciation and orthography accordingly.