

New Finds

(A)

A Hoard of Copper Kuṣāṇa Coins from Kuru Village

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The news was brought to us at Jñāna-Pravāha through the daily local newspaper *Dainik Jāgaraṇa*, Varanasi on 29th May 2009 that in course of digging the field near Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa Temple in Kuru village (five kilometers to the north of Kapasethi railway station and approachable by metalled road and about 35 kilometers from Varanasi), an earthen pot was found containing 98 copper coins. The coins were taken over by the local police and these were deposited under the safe custody of *Pradhānapati (Grāma Pradhāna)* Shri Ravindra Kumar Yadav. Being curious students of Numismatics, we from Jñāna-Pravāha approached the district administration, Varanasi for examining these coins. They not only allowed us but made all the arrangements to study these coins and also sent their staff members Shri Anant Pal and Shri Panch Bahadur with us.

The earthen pot was found by a labour Shri Samundar, Vanavasi from the field of Shri Chhote Lal Yadav. Unfortunately, the pot which contained the treasure was broken and thrown away. The field that littered with Red & Black Ware sherds and the bricks datable to the period usually referred to as Kuṣāṇa period substantiate the antiquity of the village. A well was also there in the field, which was probably made of the same types of the bricks. The villagers informed that a number of seemingly Black & Red and Northern Black Polished Ware sherds are often recovered from the fields.

On counting, these coins were found to be 137 in number, and two coins were taken away by some local newspaper reporter (as reported by the *Grāma Pradhāna*). It is a disturbed hoard, therefore, the exact contents and the numbers are not known. There must have been some more coins as stated by the *Grāma Pradhāna*.

These coins were cleaned by us for the identification and for the first hand

study. It was found that all the coins belong to the Kuṣāṇa period, i.e., c. 1st-2nd century C.E. Out of these 137 Kuṣāṇa copper coins - 18 coins are of Vīma Kadphises, 70 of Kaniṣka and 49 are identified as those of Huviṣka. As the first hand study reveals, the deities, on the reverse of these coins are - Śiva (OESHO) with bull (Vīma Kadphises), NANA, OADO, MAO, MIRRO, ATHSHO (Kaniṣka and Huviṣka) and reverse of one coin of Kaniṣka probably depicts a figure of standing Buddha also (coin no. 48). The obverse of one coin (coin no. 26) of Kaniṣka shows the king seated on couch. These coins are yet to be cleaned properly for detailed study. The weights of coins are: Vīma Kadphises coins - maximum weight - 16.1 gms and minimum weight - 15.4 gms; Kaniṣka coins - maximum weight - 17.3 gms and minimum weight - 13.2 gms; Huviṣka coins - maximum weight - 15.9 gms and minimum weight - 12.0 gms.

Hoards of this type are relatively common in the middle Gaṅgā plains. On the basis of the nature of the hoards found in the nearby areas earlier, we expected some coins of the Ayodhya rulers to be found with them. In general, these coins were exported from the Kuṣāṇa Empire to the neighbouring kingdoms in the latter half of the second century C.E. i.e. - c. 170 to 230 C.E.

The findings of the similar type of hoards in nearby areas raise a question, whether the Kuṣāṇas were ruling in this region or the coins came here through trade? The wide diffusion of the Kuṣāṇa coins in Eastern Uttar Pradesh might have necessitated meeting the economic needs. It is quite possible that these coins came by the way of trade outside their areas.