

A Coin of the Kushan Period

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Introduction –

The Kushan Empire of post-Mauryan India was such that its influence It extended to Iran, Central Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Chinese sources are one of the important sources of information about the Kushan dynasty. Two traditions of art, Mathura style and Gandhara style, developed significantly in this era.

A. Kushan dynasty

From the first century to the third century AD, the Kushan Empire was in the Indus River Valley, Kashmir, Afghanistan. Looking at the history of the Kushans, it can be seen that five branches of the Yu-Achi dynasty and the Pudhas in Central Asia arose. One branch of them settled in the vicinity of Balkh region was the Kushans.

The Kushan emperor Kujul Kadphesus consolidated his power by conquering the other four branches of the U-Achi dynasty. He later captured Kabul and the North-West Frontier Province. His copper coins bear the titles Maharaj, Rajadhiraja and Satyadharmasthita after his name in Kharosthi script. He seems to have imitated the coins of his earlier Parthian and Greek kings.

1. Kujul Cadphesus I

Kujul Cadphesus adopted a policy of imperial expansion. He conquered the territories of Kabul, Gandhara, Afghanistan in the north-west of India and established the rule of the Kushans there. He thought of entering India from there, but he had already left in AD. Died in 65.



30 to 375 AD

2. Whim Cadphesus

Cadphesus I was succeeded by his son Vim Cadphesus on the throne of the Kushans. Kujul fulfilled Cadphesus' dream of conquering India to a large extent. Many coins of Vim Cadphesus have been found in North India. From these coins it can be seen that his kingdom extended from Punjab to Banaras. He appointed his representatives in many places in India for the smooth running of the Indian government. A representative of these, Kanishka, a chief of Muthur, became the emperor of the Kushans after the death of Cadphesus.

3. Kanishka

After the death of Cadphesus II, a dispute began among his chieftains for the kingship. In that fight, Cadphesus was defeated by Kanishka, the chieftain of Mathura. After coming to power, he started Saka in the same year (78 AD) called Saka Nripa Kal.

4. Huvishk

After Kanishka, Huvishka became a mighty emperor in the Kushan dynasty. Built a city called Huvishkpur in Kashmir.

5. Vasudev

Vasudeva is known as an important emperor of the Kushan Dynasty. Its capital was Mathura. Coins of a king named Vasudeva have been found in Punjab and Kabul. It was during his lifetime that the Kushan Empire began to decline. A.D. In the 5th century, the Huns attacked and ended the Kushan power there.

B. Coins of Kushan period -

Kushan kings Kujul Cadphesus and Vim Kadphesus introduced gold coins. Kujul Cadphesus was the first king to mint gold coins for international trade in India. Its coins are engraved with Shiva, Nandi and Trishul on the reverse side. Kanishka was the strongest king of the Kushan dynasty after Vim Kadphesis. Kanishka initially minted the same coins as Vim Kadphesis. Later he seems to have used Tokharian along with Greek, Kharosthi and Prakrit languages appearing on coins. Images of Greek, Roman, Iranian as well as Indian deities are also found on Kanishka's coins.

Huvishka became the king after Kanishka. He used gold, silver, copper for his coins. The images of Visakha, Mahasena and Skanda appear for the first time on coins of Huvishka.

Vasudeva II was the last king of the Kushan Dynasty. Brahmi script is used on its coins. Its coins are large in size and less thick. After this, the Kushan Empire began to decline due to the increase of Arab encroachment and the closing of the ports on the western coasts.

Various Greek, Iranian, Bactrian and Indian deities appear on Kushan coins. The Kushan kings inscribed local deities on their coins. This shows their integration with the purposeful society. The position of the Indian deity Shiva is significant on Kushan coins.

C. Conclusion -

The Kushan period has an important place in ancient Indian history. The Kushan Empire extended not only to North India, but also to Central Asia. Trade with western countries had started. With the rise of the Mahayana sect of Buddhism, Gandhara sculpture emerged. Many Buddha images were

created. Poet like Asvaghosha composed texts due to the stimulation of Sanskrit learning. Nagarjuna the Buddhist philosopher and Charaka the Ayurveda writer during this period. A copper coin of the Kushans has also been found. The coins of the Kushan emperors are fine examples of artistic excellence and sophistication. These coins were minted in large numbers to promote the growth of trade. These coins were like a simile.



A Coin of Kujul Cadphesus



A Gold coin of Kanishka's time



Mahasena on a coin of Huvishka

D. Reference

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