CHAPTER-V

SOME FACETS OF KUSHPANA ETHOS

The establishment of the Kushana empire over parts of Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and north India, was a landmark in the political and cultural history of this diverse landscape. The Kushana era ushered in a new epoch marked by political unification, flourishing intercontinental trade, a high level of monetization, urbanization, artistic effervescence and religious catholicism. The restoration of political stability under one state not only increased commercial and cultural contacts between different parts of the Kushana empire but also facilitated trade relations between Indian and the western world, leading to overall economic growth. The coming together of people and tribes of diverse ethnicity, speaking different languages and following different religions gave rise to a cosmopolitan atmosphere, conducive for intermingling and blossoming of art and culture. The age of the Kushana was thus, marked by a remarkable ethos that left an indelible mark on Indian history.

The Kushana rulers conquered large territories through military might but to weld together heterogeneous elements and to establish their supreme authority over vanquished people must have been a greater task to accomplish. They successfully utilized religion as an instrument of state craft and thus tried to legitimise their rule through divine sanction. The divinity of kingship seems to have been the most conspicuous element in the Kushana political system.¹ Kushana monarchs assumed the title Devaputra, i.e. ‘son of god’ on their inscriptions which corresponds to the Chinese imperial title ‘t’inen-tzu’, i.e. ‘son of heaven’.² In both official as well as private records, the imperial Kushanas are referred to as Devaputras. In an inscription from Kamra (Punjab) in Pakistan, Kushana ruler Vasishka is also described as

---

² Ibid.
‘devamanush’ i.e. “god as man” or “god living in the form of man”. The deceased Kushana rulers were deified and their statues were set up for worship in Devakulas i.e. royal galleries of portrait statues. Such statues of Kushana rulers have been recovered from Mat, near Mathura and at Surkh-Kotal in Afghanistan. The Rabtak inscription also mentions the establishment of a sanctuary with images of Wema Takto, Wema Kadphises and Kanishka. The Government Museum, Mathura houses a group of statues from Mat consisting of the portraits of Kanishka (Pl.33.), his father, Wema Kadphises (which has now been identified as that of his grandfather Wema Takto by Joe Cribb) (Pl.32.) and Kushana shatrap Chashtana. The Mathura colossal seated image inscription of the time of Maharaja Rajatiraja Devaputra Kushanputra Vema Takshama (read as Takto by Joe Cribb) records the construction of a Devakula which was later renovated during the reign of Huvishka. These records indicate that the Kushana monarchs were worshipped as divinities during their lifetime as well as after death. This practice might have been inspired by a similar custom followed in the Roman empire. Wema Kadphises onwards, Kushana kings represented their own portraits with semi-divine features on their coins. While the coins of Wema Kadphises represent the royal bust emerging from clouds, flames rising from the king’s shoulders, etc. the coins of Huvishka depict a nimbate or radiate king emerging from clouds or seated cross-legged on clouds, sometimes with flames emanating from his shoulders. Vasudeva and his successors also continued the use of nimbus around the king’s head. These semi-divine delineations of the royal portraits on the obverse of their coins was a deliberate attempt to favourably compare their powers to the divine powers of the gods and goddesses represented on the reverse, with similar attributes. The Shahji-ki-Dheri relic casket, bearing an inscription of Kanishka, displays the standing figure of a king in Central Asian dress flanked by a divinity with a crescent on one side (Moon god) and another divine figure having a radiating symbol behind the head (Sun god) on

---

3 ASIAR, 1911-12, P. 24; Mat inscription, JRAS, 1924, p. 397 ff, No. 3.
4 RFKE, p. 3158 and 319.
The royal figure most probably represents Kanishka-I who is shown as anointed by Sun and Moon gods in this casket. In the Rabtak inscription, Kanishka claims to have obtained kingship through the agency of a number of deities, mostly Zoroastrian, headed by Nana. It describes Kanishka as 'the great deliverer, the righteous, the just, the autocrat, the god, one who is worthy of worship, one who has obtained kingship from Nana and all the gods..." It is significant that the need of appropriating symbols of divinity was felt first by Wema Kadphises whose reign corresponds with the expansion of Kushana domain. On the coins of Kanishka and Huvishka, deities like Pharro, Orlangno and Shaoraro that allude to the right and might of the Kushana empire, find representation. Clearly, the Kushana rulers popularised the idea of divine kingship, in order to draw allegiance from their subjects, by exploiting their religious sentiments.

The Kushana rulers assumed high sounding titles borrowed from different regions and civilizations. Besides the title Devaputra, they also adopted the Indian titulature, Maharaja, Rajatiraj, i.e. great king, the king of kings, its Iranian counterpart – Shaonano Shao and its Greek counterpart- Basileus Basileon. This suggests that the Kushana monarch exhibited his exalted position to all his subjects-Indians, Iranians, Greeks and Scytho-Parthians. At the same time these titles indicate Kushana paramountcy over areas where lesser princes or lords retained local power. In the Ara inscription, which is a private record, Kanishka II is bestowed with the imperial title ‘Kaisara’, the equivalent of Ceasar used by Roman emperors suggesting Kushana contact with Rome and a claim to comparable status. These high sounding imperial titles and the practice of a deification of Kushana kings suggests an attempt to create the cult of the emperor.

1 The British Museum Quarterly, 1964, Vol. XXVIII, p. 44.
2 RFKE, pp. 316-17
4 B.N. Puri, India Under the Kushanas, Bombay, 1965, p. 80.
5 B.N. Puri, 1999, op.cit.
The majestic portraiture of the kings on the obverse of Kushana coinage and some statues, speaks in volume about the authority of the king. All Kushana kings are represented diademed which implies royal status. On the ‘Augustus and Seated king’ type of coins of Kujula Kadphises (Pl. 3a) the king is shown seated on a curule chair which probably implies his judicial authority. All monarchs are depicted wearing Central Asian dresses like long coat, tunic, trousers, boots, etc, mostly sacrificing and holding weapons like trident, trident-cum-battle axe, spear, club, elephant goad or sceptre. Sacrificing might have been considered as an act of merit by the imperial Kushanas, for protecting the kingdom. The sceptre (rajadanda) may be taken to symbolize royal rank or the power to punish emphasizing on the king's role as the protector of his subjects. The trident, spear, elephant goad or club are all aggressive war weapons which reflect on the Kushana monarch's position as the supreme commander of his forces. Some of them are represented helmeted which again emphasizes their military functions. In the famous headless statue of Kanishka from Mat, he is shown holding an unsheathed sword and a club, exuding power from every angle. (Pl.33). On some coins Wema Kadphises and Huvishka are shown riding elephants which might have formed the vanguards of their army. It is interesting to note that while the coins of Huvishka depict him in various relaxing postures, reflecting stability, Vasudeva-I, whose reign coincides with the beginning of political disintegration of the empire, is represented wearing a heavily armoured warrior costume. It seems that like other Central Asian states, the amalgam which held the empire together was the personalities of the rulers. The Kushana kings thus successfully utilized coinage as a medium of royal propaganda, using it for disseminating the awe-inspiring images of absolute monarchs among their people.

---

1 B. Chattopadhyay, 1975, op. cit., p. 81.
2 RFKE, p.335.
3 B. Chattopadhyay, 1975, op. cit., pp. 81,83.
4 Ibid., p. 83.
That the Kushanas probably succeeded in impressing their subjects, can be gleaned from the private records of their times. Several private inscriptions from different parts of the empire attribute semi-divine and imperial titles to the reigning monarchs, sometimes wishing for their prosperity, health and happiness. The donors of pious gifts not only wished for spiritual benefits for themselves and their family members but also wanted the ruling king to be benefited by the merits of their act.¹ On the basis of the epigraphic and numismatic evidence, we can surmise that the Kushanas tried to woo their diverse subjects by popularizing images of semi-divine, powerful monarchs with supreme military, judicial and executive powers. The king was seen on his coins and thus by his people, as a military commander, a performer of sacrifices, the upholder of law and order and the protector of his subjects. The subjects in their turn wished well for the reigning monarch and owed allegiance to him.

We have little information about the administrative setup under the Kushana rule. While we find no reference to counsellors or a council of ministers in the Kushana records, some inscriptions do mention the titles and at times the names of various officials, who were part of the administrative machinery. Officials like *Mahakshatrapa, Kshatrapa, Mahadandanayaka, Dandanayaka, Gramika, Navakarmika, Padrapala* etc. find mention in the epigraphs which alludes to the prevalence of a system of graded hierarchy of same type of officials in the empire.² Although not much can be convincingly gathered about the powers and position of these officials, it seems that provincial governors appointed by the king, enjoyed the titles *Kshatrapa* and *Mahakshatrapa*. Chinese texts like the History of the Second Han Dynasty (Chapter 118) by Fan Ye inform us that the Kushanas might have appointed viceroys in some provinces.³ It is difficult to ascertain the relation of the Kushana kings with the subdued ruling houses and other republican states. In all probability, the Kushana sovereigns allowed autonomous and semi-

---

¹ *RFKE*, p. 320.
² *RFKE*, p. 338.
autonomous powers to survive within the empire without much state intervention. Even village population continued to thrive under their own village assemblies and headmen-Gramikas who find mention in a few inscriptions.

The political unification of a large mass of land and its people under the Kushana rule, gave an impetus to intercontinental trade. Central Asia, under the Kushana domain, played an important intermediary role of world dimensions in the transmission of artifacts as well as ideas and culture. The Great Silk Route was the most important transcontinental trade and diplomatic road of the age. It was laid across the lands of the Kushanas and the Parthians, connecting China to the Mediterranean Roman empire.¹ The rise of the Roman empire as a mighty power in the western world had favourably affected Indian trade from the 1st century B.C.E. onwards, as it created demand for Indian luxury goods like muslin, cotton, perfume, spices, indigo, precious stones etc., in the eastern part of the Roman empire. According to Hou Han Shu, Wema Kadphises' conquest of Shen-tu or T'ien-Chu, i.e. the lower Indus region, from Parthians, resulted in the phenomenal growth of Kushana power which made them extremely rich and strong.² Occupation of this area gave Kushanas an intermediary role in the highly profitable commerce flowing from China to the Western provinces of the Roman empire via the Kushana dominions. The remarkable variety of objects, such as glass from Egypt, thousands of carved Indian ivories, Roman and Alexandrian sculptures and Chinese silk fragments found at Begram in Afghanistan, dated from the Kushana period attest to the truly international nature of the commerce during this period.³ In fact, the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea refers to raw silk, silk cloth and yarn (Serikon) being brought from Thina (China) and through Bactria (in the Kushana dominion) to Barygaza (Broach)

and also along the Ganges (and by sea) to Damirica (in South India). The silk yarn must have also been taken to the lower Indus country whose ports were among to the first important Indian trading stations for sailors from the Persian Gulf. These ports provided the merchants of northwestern India ample opportunity for the transhipment of their commodities as they were well connected with not only Central Asia but also different parts of India. Obviously long distance trade was mainly in expensive luxury goods as the costs and dangers of such trade militated against the transport of heavy and ordinary objects. Important articles of export included animals like horses, Indian monkeys, lions, birds, wool, ivory, silk, raw cotton, cotton fabric, muslin, camphor, indigo, cinnamon, cardamom, clove, castus, ginger, dry fruits, spikenard, etc. Systematic trade in spikenard, cinnamon and pepper seems to have begun in the Kushana period. Indian imports included glass and glass vessels, wines, base metals like lead, silver and gold, silver vessels and plates and gold as bullion. It seems that the conquest of lower Indus region enabled Kushanas to regulate levy taxes and thereby to gain financially from the commercial transactions carried on through that region between Central Asia and northwestern India on the one hand and the Roman Empire and other western countries on the other. Trade relations thus linked the northern Indian land routes with the silk route and the Oxus route, while enjoining the sea-ports of the lower Indus delta as well as ports of Bengal and Orissa from where a bulk of products of the Kushana state were processed for shipment. The establishment of a strong central authority over this vast area from the Oxus territories to the interior of northern India offered security and freedom of movement to traders and manufacturers of different parts of the Kushana empire. The improvement in communication system also gave a fillip to internal trade. Land and water routes that passed along important towns, river

2 Ibid.
5 B.N. Mukherjee, 1969, *op. cit.*, p.82.
valleys, mountain passes and coasts, connected almost the whole of India and Central Asia. Articles of trade and commerce could smoothly move through secure routes facing minimum number of tariff-posts while covering a large part of Sino-Roman or Indo-Roman trade routes. These reasons might have induced the merchants to pay the maximum possible taxes, resulting in the accumulation of great wealth for the Kushanas. The dependence of Kushana prosperity on the fortune made out of brisk Indo-Roman trade is borne out by the simultaneous decrease of the Kushana-Roman trade and the beginning of the decline of the Kushana empire in the reign of Vasudeva-I.¹

This progress in trade and commerce must have been preceded by developments in the field of agriculture and craft production. Archaeological excavations in Central Asia have shown that the Kushana period was marked by a considerable development of agriculture and irrigation.² The Khorezmian excavations testify that the canal system was largely improved in Kushana times, when the canals became narrower and deeper than before and were laid through the middle of the fields.³ The construction of huge irrigation canals such as the Dargom, Bulungur, Narpai and Shuhrud on the Zaravshan, the main canals in Khorezm, the Salar canal in the Tashkent Oasis and the regulation of the water economy of the Fergana valley, all go back to the time of Kushana empire.⁴ Explorations and excavations in the neighbourhood of Ai-Khanoun in Bactria have revealed evidence of maintaining big canals for irrigation and for extending the area of cultivation during the Kushana period.⁵ The Kushana empire succeeded in organizing huge public irrigation works for the purpose of creating an extensive network of canals in Central Asia. In a survey of the Peshawar region, remains of old canals, indications of agricultural land on the river courses and traces of fields on hill terraces with devices to channelise rain water have been located, the origins of all of which

¹ B.N. Mukherjee, 1969, op. cit., p.82.
can be dated to the Kushana age. The numerous references to the construction of wells, tanks and water reservoirs in Kushana inscriptions (around 16 epigraphs) suggest that the practice of providing water facilities, which may have been organized individually or collectively, was considered as an act of merit. According to the *Surkh-Kotal* inscription of the year 31 of Kanishka era, Nokonzoko, probably a high official, renovated the sanctuary, dug a well and set up a conduit for flowing of water to the sanctuary. Both the Shakaradarra and the Rawal inscriptions record the excavation of a well in the year 40 of the Kanishka era. The Mat inscription of the time of Huvishka records the repair of a tank and a *devakula* by a Bakanpati, son of a *Mahadandanayak*. Since the construction of large irrigation facilities must have been a costly affair, they might have been financed by the state. These developments of public water works in the Kushana period must have facilitated irrigation and given a fillip to agricultural production. We can get a glimpse of the plant economy of the Kushana period by looking at the botanical remains collected during the excavations of sites like Sanghol and Hulaskhera. Over 300 plant samples were collected from the habitational levels (c. 100-300 A.D.) of Sanghol including rice, wheat, two kinds of barley, jowar, chickpea, field pea, lentil, grass pea, green gram, black gram, horse gram, sesame, fenugreek, coriander, cumin, black pepper, cotton, date, grapes, jamun, anwala, reetha, harra, walnut, almond, etc. The excavation of Hulaskhera brought to light the botanical remains of green gram, grass pea, garden pea, oat, jowar, silk cotton (semul), jujebe-ber, bahera, blue stem grass, meadow grass, etc., apart from rice, wheat, barley, African millet, bathua and indigo, which were grown in the earlier period as well.

---

Both the literary and archaeological evidence attest to the existence of a large number of crafts and professions during the Kushana period. Kushana epigraphs recording pious donations refer to professionals such as ironsmith (lohakara), goldsmith (suvarnakara), carvan leaders (sarthavaha), perfume merchant (gandhika), carpenter (vadhaki), merchant (vanik), trader (vyavahari), cloak maker (pravrika), jeweller (manikara), dyer or washerman (rajaka), scribe (divira), sculptor, dance troupes, etc.¹ These records attest to the flourishing economic conditions of at least some individuals of these occupational classes, who were rich enough to make magnificent donations. These were probably rich traders and/or industrialists in their respective fields, employing other men to work under them.² As trade relations developed, the demand of handicrafts and industrial goods must have received a boost during this period. The Angavijja, a text originally compiled in the Kushana period and substantially retouched during the Gupta age, contains a list of nearby forty-five kinds of professionals. The text also mentions nearly eight types of such professionals who earned their livelihood by tongue, sixteen types of metal workers, eleven classes of merchants, three types of weavers, six types of physicians and eight types of illusionists.³ Mahavastu, a Buddhist work of about 2nd century A.D., provides a list of various artisans, craftsmen and guilds of traders and manufacturers giving an idea about the economic vibrancy of India during the early centuries of the Christian era.⁴ Generally artisans and craftsmen worked either as individual entrepreneurs or through guilds. The existence of trade guilds can be attested to by the Mathura inscription of year 28 of Kanishka era, which mentions two Shrenis (guilds) of Samitakara (flourmaker) and Raka (?).⁵ Several Shresthis, i.e. foremen of a merchant guild or bankers also find mention in the Kushana epigraphic records. Other contemporary law books and epigraphic evidence from western India sufficiently bring home the importance of guilds during this

¹ S. Shrava, The Dated Kushana Inscriptions, New Delhi, 1993, pp.3-4.
² RFKE, p.366.
⁴ K. Prasad, Cities, Crafts and Commerce under the Kushanas, Delhi, 1984, p.27.
⁵ EI, XXI, p.55ff.
period. The growing number of crafts must have augmented industrial production and brightened the prospects of internal and external trade. The evidence of an ironsmith’s workshop from Kheradih, metal working from Ahichchhatra, Siswania, Noh, Iswal and Saradkel and glass working from Kopia, further attests to the growth of industry. Even the material remains in the shape of pottery, bricks, beads, metal objects, glass, semi-precious stones, etc. unearthed and explored from Kushana rural as well as urban sites reveal the prosperous economic life of their inhabitants.

The progress in trade and industry as well as conditions of peace and security gave a fillip to the process of urbanization. It is clearly evident from the study of archaeological excavations and explorations all over the Kushana dominion that the number and size of urban centres increased exponentially during the Kushana rule. We can surmise from the archaeological data studied in the previous chapter that the Kushana age was marked by habitational expansion, increased depositional thickness and urbanization in Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and all over north India. Excavations have revealed the existence of more flourishing urban centres and settlements during the Kushana times in comparison to preceding and succeeding periods. Most of the existing towns within the limits of the empire came under direct or indirect control of Kushana rule and flourished on account of the economic prosperity witnessed during the age. Kushana urban centres were characterized by well planned and large, baked brick structures, system of roads with lanes and bye-lanes, brick drains, provision of sewage, wells, tanks, a vibrant money economy and evidence of flourishing crafts and industries. Several new towns sprang up as a consequence of the increased

5 IAR, 2001-02, pp.228-29.
trade and crafts while older cities expanded. An immense number of Buddhist establishments came up in Afghanistan, Pakistan and north India where new monastic complexes and stupas were constructed or existing ones were enlarged and renovated. Places of strategic, administrative and religious importance also developed into towns.¹ Some of them like Mathura, Purushpur (modern Peshawar), Balkh, etc. were administrative centres. Some like Begram, Taxila, Pushkalavati (modern Charsada), Bhita, etc. developed as Kushana marts and offer evidence of commercial exchange, while some others like Kausambi, Piprahwa-Ganwaria, Ambaran, Harwan, Sanghol, etc. seem to have developed as religious centres in addition. Towns like Sunet, Naurangabad, Bhita and Atranjikheda have yielded evidence of Kushana coin moulds and thus might have served as mint towns during the Kushana period. The Rajatarangini of Kalhana, a Kashmiri text of about the 12th century A.D., refers to the establishment of the towns of Hushkapur, identified as Ushkar (inside the Baramula pass), Jushkapura, identified with Zukur (north of Srinagar) and Kanishkapur i.e. Kanispur (between Baramula and Srinagar) by the Turushka i.e. Kushana Kings – Hush ka, Jushka and Kanishka respectively.² Almost all the excavated sites discussed in the previous chapter (IV) have revealed rich Kushana layers, more prosperous, in terms of their thickness, cultural assemblage and structures than earlier and later phases. Most of the urban centres were in proximity to rich hinterland and were well connected with trade channels, while some like Mathura, Bhita, Kausambi, Varanasi, etc. were situated on river banks. Archaeological excavations have brought to light remains of fortified walls at Sirsukh (Taxila), Sanghol, Harsh-Ka-Tila (Thanesar), Kausambi, Sravasti, Pataliputra, etc. On the basis of mostly incomplete excavations, it is difficult to estimate the population of these cities. But if the much smaller sites of northern Bactria, such as Dalverzin Tepe, were estimated to have 10,000 to 15,000 inhabitants, Balkh alone in the Kushana period may have had over 100,000 inhabitants.³ The estimated

population of Kausambi during the early Christian centuries was 32,000 people when some 200 hectare were occupied within the fortified area.\(^1\) Apart from being centres of production and consumption, the Kushana towns played a pivotal role in the exchange of commodities. The prosperity of towns largely depended on the volume of production and trade that was carried through them. Thus brisk trade was a cause as well as an effect of the growth of towns.\(^2\) The extensive use of currency was another indicator of the prosperity of towns and trade.

The Kushana age was marked by an unprecedented growth of money economy which was a direct result of increased commercial activities. Although the Indo-Greeks had issued a few gold coins, Kushana rulers were the first to issue an extensive imperial gold currency in India. As we have discussed in Chapter III, it was Wema Kadphises, who reformed the existing monetary system and started the issue of large scale gold and copper coinage. While the gold coins issued by the Kushana monarchs might have been largely used to facilitate foreign trade and commerce, their numerous copper coins were meant to aid small scale internal transactions. The idea of gold coins was probably inspired by the Roman aureus, its weight and size, but even at their institution, they did not precisely copy the weight standard of the current Roman aureus. The gold coins of Wema Kadphises were clearly struck to a standard of about 7.9-8.0 gms.\(^3\) After the reform of coinage, the copper species of Wema, began to follow the weight standard which had been earlier used to mint Attic drachms (c. 4-4.5 gms), didrachms (c. 8-8.5 gms) and tetradrachms (c. 17 gms).\(^4\) The appellation dinar which was probably applied to Kushana gold coins, was derived from the name of the Roman denarius aureus.\(^5\) Dramma on the other hand was adopted by the Indians.

---

4 Savita Sharma, Gold Coins of the Imperial Kushanas and Their Successors in Bharat Kala Bhawan, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, 1999, p.25.
normally in the sense of a silver coin from the Greek drachma, but in case of Kushanas it may have been applied to copper coins. The gold coins of Kushana times were known variously as *Dinara, Kushana, Suvarma, Kedara* and *Nanaka*. As we have already discussed in Chapter III, because of the operation of Gresham's Law in the northwestern areas of the Indian subcontinent, the Kushanas did not issue a regular silver currency. The limited silver issues of Kushanas seem to be provincial coinage meant for restricted circulation in the lower Indus region. But on the strength of the Mathura inscription of the year 28, which records an endowment of a total 1100 (550 + 550) *puranas*, we can safely argue, that silver currency also formed a part of the monetary system of the Kushana age. The *purana* coins mentioned in this inscription could have been either indigenous silver coins, struck officially or unofficially in pre-Kushana period or even silver pieces minted locally or unofficially in the Kushana period itself. The Kushana administration seems to have given approval to or at least did not object to the circulation of these non-Kushana silver coins (*puranas*) in an integral part of the Kushana empire like Mathura. Thus three denominations of gold coin, viz. double dinaras, dinaras and quarter dinaras; four denominations of copper coins, viz. tetradrachms, diadrachms, drachms and hemidrachms (introduced by Kanishka) and some silver coins were in circulation during this period, making the Kushana economy a highly monetized economy.

Kushana gold and copper coins upto the time of Vasudeva-I were meant for circulation throughout the empire as they can not be assigned to any single zone. However on a small number of coins of Vasudeva-I and the coins of his successors, isolated Brahmi letters can be noticed, in addition to the Bactrian legends. Since Brahmi was not in vogue in the western provinces of the Kushana empire including Bactria, its appearance on the coins of the

---

1 B. Chattopadhyay, 1975, *op. cit.*, pp.201-203.
2 *RFKE*, pp.44-45.
later Kushana rulers may allude to the traits of regionalism or localization in the Kushana coinage or probably they gradually lost their western provinces to the Sassanian power. B.N. Mukherjee has also pointed out the emergence of localization in the coinage of Later Kushana rulers. According to him, coins bearing 'Shiva with Bull and carrying the nandipada symbol' can be attributed to the Bactrian region, the Ardoksho type coins of Kanishka-III and Vasudeva-II to Punjab region and 'Nana on Lion' coin type of Kanishka II may be assigned to the eastern sector of the empire.\(^1\) But we have not come across any 'Nana on Lion’ type coins in the coin cabinets of the four museums of Uttar Pradesh, viz. State Museum, Lucknow; Government Museum, Mathura; Bharat Kala Bhawan, Varanasi and the Allahabad Museum.\(^2\)

As discussed earlier, the amount of pure gold was very high in the coins issued by the imperial Kushanas, though it gradually decreased with each successive ruler. From an average of 98.5% pure gold in the coins of Wema Kadphises; 97.67% in the coins of Kanishka; 96.05% and 93.45% in the two variety of coins of Huvishka; 95.23% in the coins of Vasudeva I; 91.15% in the coins of Kanishka-III and 91.2% in the coins of Vasudeva II, we notice a progressive decline in the gold content of Kushana coinage.\(^3\) The Kushanas thus maintained the same weight standard throughout their rule and tried to address their economic problems by a gradual reduction in the intrinsic value of gold in their coinage. On the other hand, the weight standard of Roman aurei was regularly and progressively reduced from the time of Nero, while the purity of gold was maintained. This betrays a fundamental disparity between the monetary policies of these two states.\(^4\) The Kushanas also adjusted the weight of their currency to the changing ratio between gold and copper. Thus with the gradual reduction in the intrinsic value of gold in their gold coins, there was a progressive reduction in the weight of their

\(^1\) *RFKE*, p.179.
\(^2\) P. Dubey, *Kushanas in Uttar Pradesh: A Numismatic Study*, 2002, M. Phil Dissertation (unpublished), University of Delhi, Chapter III.
\(^4\) *RFKE*, p.359.
copper tetradrachms. But despite these reductions the acceptance of Kushana coins by their subjects betrays their trust in the stability of the currency and also the ability of the mint masters to sell them above their intrinsic worth. It can be argued that because of the decline in the amount of precious metal, the Kushana gold specie could not possibly compete with the Roman gold specie in the territories outside the Kushana empire. But as the Indian subcontinent was favourably placed in terms of exchange of goods with the Roman orient as well as some other countries of Asia and Africa, the balance was received in inter alia Roman gold. Thus the Kushana empire never needed to export gold coins in any great quantity. Moreover, as the political and economic might of the Kushana empire grew, its currency earned credibility outside its territories as well. Infact Kushana coins have been discovered far beyond the borders of the empire in distant countries like Chinese Turkistan, Southern Russia and even Ethiopia, which speaks in volume of the international value of the Kushana gold coins.

It is remarkable that the Kushanas managed to mint an enormous quantity of gold coins for over two centuries in a region lacking any significant output of gold. The question that arises is, where did they obtain gold for such extensive gold coinage from? The most plausible source could be the gold coins of the Roman emperors and bullion that poured into India either directly to the Kushana empire or via south Indian trade. These Roman coins were probably melted down and recoined as Kushana coins. Pliny, while refering to flourishing commerce between India and the Roman empire in the first century A.D., deplores the heavy drain of gold specie from Rome to India to pay for the luxuries imported for the Roman aristocrats. The conversion of Roman gold into Kushana gold coins seems to be a possibility because despite brisk trade relations while 57 hoards of Roman gold coins have been

---

3 RFKE, p.359.
4 Congresso Internazionale di Numismatic, 1961, Roma, pp.475f.
found to the south of the Vindhyas, only 11 have been found in the north.\(^1\) Bactria, the seat of Kushana power was famous from an early age for the availability of gold in its markets. Among the suggested sources of supply of gold to Bactria were ancient Scythia and Ural and Altai regions.\(^2\) Gold as dust was also procurable in certain regions including the area around the Indus, by washing alluvial sand. The availability of gold in Sindh in the time of Alexander is known from Strabo. R.S. Sharma has suggested India, Rome and Caucasus areas as the possible sources of Kushana gold.\(^3\) Although the famous Kolar gold fields lay beyond the Kushana empire, they might have exploited the gold mines of Dhaldhum (Singhbhum district of present day Jharkhand), which certainly lay within their sphere of influence.\(^4\) Kushanas may also have obtained gold from the Roman Empire by way of trade which in turn procured it from Africa and the Caucasus area.\(^5\) The chemical analysis of copper coins of the Kushanas shows that these were made of comparatively pure copper, from a sulphide ore which is indicated by the considerable amount of sulphur.\(^6\) Kushanas in all probabilities, obtained copper for their coins from the abundant copper mines of Rajasthan.

The Kushana period witnessed the blossoming of artistic traditions, which is well manifested in the flourishing condition of the art schools of Mathura, Gandhara and Bactria under the Kushana rule. The well executed Kushana coins are also objects of art. They reflect intermingling of art and culture of different regions, included in the vast empire. The coins of the Kushanas were produced by die-striking technique. A regular alignment of the obverse and reverse impressions on a large number of coins suggest that utmost care was taken at the time of their minting. But the reverse of some Kushana coins are partly out of their flans and only some gold coins are

\(^1\) D.N. Jha, *Ancient India: An Introductory Outline*, New Delhi, 1995 (Eighth print), p.82.
\(^4\) Ibid., p.4.
\(^5\) Ibid., p.5.
exactly round in shape, indicating that mechanical instruments for controlling
dies were not used. Kushana coins were minted in different parts of the
empire bearing similar types as they were struck for circulation throughout the
empire. The royal figures on coins are rigid and majestic and to some extent
frontal in their appearance. We can discern some features of Bactrian art of
the Kushana period in the facial treatment, dresses and costumes of Wema
Kadphises, Kanishka and Huvishka, which is indicated by angular and linear
treatment of standing figures, oval faces with open eyes, semi-circular folds on
the sleeves, angular folds on garments, etc. The most important obverse
device of the Kushana coins – 'King sacrificing at an altar' appears to be
borrowed from a coin type of the Parthian king Gotarzes-II (c. A.D. 38-51). It
was subsequently adopted by the Imperial Guptas on their coins. Some of the
portraits of Huvishka could be compared with the portraits of some Roman
emperors on their coins. The royal portraits on the Roman coins, often
suggesting the divine and super-human power of their issuers, seem to have
inspired Kushana mint masters to depict features like flaming shoulders, bust
rising from the clouds, nimbus, etc., indicating divinity. The representations of
various deities on the reverse of these coins, reflect more plasticity, flexibility
and roundness of form, suggesting the influence of Gandhara or possibly the
Mathura School of Art, that reached its zenith during the Kushana age. The
somewhat sensuous treatment of female figures, especially Ardoksho, on
certain later coins of imperial Kushanas can be favourably compared with a
number of sculptures of the Mathura school. The figures on both the obverse
and reverse of the Kushana coins are often shown wearing a transparent over
garment enveloping the thick drapery underneath (Pl. 6 and 7). This feature is
also noticed on the coins of Indo-Parthian ruler Mauzes. Some characteristics

2 Ibid., p.31; B.N. Mukherjee, Kushana Coins of the Land of Five Rivers, Calcutta, 1978,
p.18.
3 B.N. Mukherjee, 'The Prototype of an obverse device of Kushana coinage', JNSI, Vol. XXII,
4 DAK, p.73.
of the Alexandrian School of Art are also reflected in some coins of the Kushana rulers.¹

The reverse of the Kushana coins display a bewildering variety of deities belonging to Hellenistic, Iranian and Indian (Brahmanical and Buddhist) pantheon. It is a striking evidence of religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence of various ideologies in different ethnic and territorial zones of the empire. It also suggests that no religious faith was officially patronized at the cost of the others. The most common hypothesis offered to explain the appearance of such varied deities is that the Kushana kings with their eclectic attitude towards religion allowed the representation of various faiths practiced within their empire.² But this hypothesis fails to explain the absence of the representation of Jain pontiffs even though Kushana inscriptions clearly point out to the popularity of Jainism in that age and sculptural icons of Jinas have been found aplenty in areas included in the Kushan empire (Mathura School of Art). Significantly, river Oxus bordering Bactria was considered important enough by the Kushana mint masters to be personified as Oaksho on some coins of Huvishka.³ This suggests that Bactria was given preference over other regions of the empire, atleast in the matter of choosing the reverse devices for the coins struck from official mints. Moreover, the deliberate use of the Bactrian language for the legends on coins meant for circulation throughout the empire indicates that Bactria was the most important of all territories held by the imperial Kushanas. This is however understandable as Bactria being the prime seat of Kushana power. In this light, it seems more logical that icons of religious faiths that were familiar in Bactria, found a place on the reverse of the Kushana coinage. Since, Jainism was perhaps not known in Bactria, the Jinas were not considered by the mint masters of the Kushanas, despite the popularity of the faith in the Mathura region.

¹ B.N. Mukherjee, 1978, op. cit.
³ Ibid., pp.181-182.
Kushana rulers, like the Roman emperors, successfully employed coinage as a medium of propaganda to aggrandize royal power. Several coin types were devised to propagate ideas that helped in the creation of the cult of an emperor. Apart from emphasizing on the divine origin of kingship, they also represented deities alluding to the right and might of the Kushana empire.¹ Thus deities like Pharro – a God personifying the Iranian concept of glory and legitimacy of kings, Shaoreoro representing the genius of an imperial might as well as the desirable kingdom (originally Kshathra Vairya) and Orlangno (Verethragna) – the Iranian war god, the god of victory and 'royal glory', find a place on the reverse of the coins of Kanishka and Huvishka.² These representations allude to the creation of an imperial cult.³ It is interesting to note that the reigns of Kanishka and Huvishka coincide with the heydays of the Kushana empire when there was a need to consolidate Kushana power for which establishment of an imperial cult could have been useful.

It is Kanishka and Huvishka who have represented heterogeneous religious elements on their coins betraying an eclectic attitude towards religion. It can be seen as an attempt on the part of these rulers to woo the diverse population of their vast empire. Sometimes more than one deity related to a particular phenomenon but drawn from different religious cult⁴ find depiction such as both Athsho (Iranian fire god) and Hephaistos (Greek god of fire), Mao (Iranian moon god) and Salane (Greek moon god) are represented on the coins of Kanishka. In some cases, the deities or their attributes evinced certain syncretist trends in the religious thoughts of the Kushana period. Certain coins of Huvishka depict 'Ommo' (Uma) holding a lotus as the consort of Shiva while a few others show a female figure, holding cornucopia, bearing the legend Nana, standing by the side of Shiva.⁵ This indicates an intermingling of the cult of Nana, the Mother Goddess of the orient, with that

² DAK, pp.95-96, 99.
³ RFKE, p.320.
⁵ DAK, p.94, Pl. VIII.
of Uma. On some coins of Huvishka, three headed and four armed Shiva is depicted holding various attributes like a \textit{vajra} (thunderbolt) or a \textit{gada} (mace) or a \textit{chakra} (wheel), etc. apart from the usual ones associated with Shiva. Thunderbolt is the weapon of Zeus and the Indian god Indra, while the wheel, a solar symbol and mace are generally associated with Vishnu in Indian mythological tradition.\(^1\) Similarly, the representation of 'Nana seated on lion', on some coins of Kanishka-III\(^2\) betrays the association of Sumerian Goddess Nana with Indian Amba or Durga whose mount is a lion. The appearance of these syncretistic elements from varied belief systems emphasizes the process of acculturation and the spirit of the religious catholicism fostered in the empire.

From the time of Vasudeva, we find a reduction in the number of deities appearing on Kushana coins. While only Shiva and Nana are depicted on the coins of Vasudeva-I, Nana, Ardoksho and Shiva appear on the issues of Kanishka III. Only Ardoksho and Shiva are portrayed on the coins of Vasudeva-II and his successors. This shows a change in the policy of Kushana monetary system. It can be suggested that in the face of shrinking political authority from the reign of Vasudeva-I, they gave up the practice of using coinage as a medium of propaganda.

Kushana coins also throw light on the personal religious inclinations of the Kushana rulers. Kujula Kadphises, the first known Kushana ruler assumed the epithets \textit{Dharma-thita} and \textit{Sachadharmathita}, i.e. "steadfast in the faith" and "steadfast in true faith" respectively, on his copper coins.\(^3\) While historians like Vincent Smith\(^4\) are of the opinion that these indicate Kujula's adherence to the Buddhist faith, some others like Bhaskar Chattopadhyay\(^5\) and J.N. Banerjee\(^6\) maintain that the \textit{Satyadharma} of Kadphises I was no other faith than Shaivism. On some coin specimens of Kujula, Vincent Smith

\(^1\) S. Sharma, 1999, \textit{op. cit.}, p.33.
\(^2\) B.N. Mukherjee, 1969, \textit{op. cit.}, Pl. I.
\(^3\) J.N. Banerjee, \textit{Development of Hindu Iconography}, Delhi, 1974, p.112.
\(^4\) V. Smith, 'Numismatic Notes and Novelties', \textit{JASB}, Part II, 1897; Part III, 1898.
\(^6\) J.N. Banerjee, 1974 \textit{op. cit.}
identified the image of seated Buddha on one side and 'Shiva with bull' on the other. Another type of copper coins representing seated Buddha in conventional attitude with an uncertain object in his right hand, on the obverse and standing Zeus on the reverse, have also been attributed to him,\(^1\) although the identification of Buddha is doubtful. If these doubtful representations of Buddha on Kujula's coins are accepted, then it is likely that "Satyadharma" stood for "Satdharma" or Buddhism.\(^2\) Wema Kadphises took the titles "Sarvalokeshvara Maheshvara" and "Tradata" i.e. "the lord of all regions and devotee of Mahesha or Shiva" and "saviour" respectively.\(^3\) Lord Shiva is faithfully depicted reclining on his bull on the reverse of most of his coins with the exception of a single type that depicts Shiva's emblem, the trident – battle-axe. These coins also bear the nandipada symbol, which confirms that Wema was an ardent devotee of Shiva. Evidently, the worship of Shiva was prevalent in the northwestern region of India especially Punjab from some centuries before the Christian era,\(^4\) and as the Kushanas conquered this area, they embraced Shaivism too. The next ruler, Kanishka, who extended his empire to the whole of north India, at least upto Pataliputra, portrayed a variety of Indian, Iranian and Greek deities on his coins. It is known from Buddhist tradition that Kanishka was a devout Buddhist and a great patron of Buddhism, who convened the Fourth Buddhist Council, probably in Kashmir. Kanishka's age witnessed the rise of Mahayana Buddhism and he is also associated with the spread of Buddhist faith in Central Asia and China. He is known to have constructed a magnificent stupa at Purushpur (Peshawar).\(^5\) Despite his personal faith Kanishka adopted a catholic religious policy, showing respect to the beliefs of all his conquered people and Buddha was only one of the many divinities represented on the reverse of his coins. Kanishka is also associated with the establishment of a dynastic sanctuary

\(^2\) B. Chattopadhyay, 1975, *op. cit.*
\(^3\) P.B. Desai, 'Religious Policy of the Kushanas' in P.B. Desai (ed.), *Some Problems Concerning the Kushanas*, Kannada Research Institute, Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1971, p.4.
dedicated to the cult of fire at Surkh-Kotal and a Nana sanctuary in the Rabtak inscription.

Huvishka continued the policy of religious appeasement of his subjects and in fact increased the number of deities exhibited on the reverse of Kushana coins. Although Buddha is conspicuous by his absence on the coins of Huvishka, the epigraphic evidence suggests that Huvishka too patronized Buddhism and built a splendid monastery at Mathura.\(^1\) Due to lack of evidence, it is difficult to ascertain the personal faith of the successors of Kanishka as they seem to have patronized a variety of religious sects prevalent in their empire. On the coins of Vasudeva, the reverse of a large number of coins depict Shiva, though some coins bear the representation of Nana and Ardoksho. The contemporary religious art and Kushana epigraphs provide ample evidence to suggest that Buddhism and Jainism flourished along with Brahmanical cults and even Naga and Yaksha worship in the Indian territories during the Kushana age. The depiction of Kushana kings sacrificing at the altar attests to their belief in fire worship which was prevalent in both Zoroastrian and Brahmanical religions. Thus the Kushana rulers fostered the spirit of religious co-existence and extended their patronage to different religious faiths, without any discrimination, during their rule.

The cosmopolitan atmosphere and affluence of the Kushana age found an expression in the production of art objects and sculptures of great beauty. The earliest representation of Buddha in anthropomorphic form, is believed to have begun during the Kushana period, when the Afghanistan-Gandhara region and Mathura, emerged as two major centres of artistic activity. While the issue, as to which region first produced the image of Buddha, is far from settled, most authors now tend to believe that both centres created the Buddha image independently as both have characteristic representation of the Master.\(^2\) The Mathura Buddha is usually called the Kapardin type on account

---

\(^1\) B. Chattopadhyay, 1975, \textit{op. cit.}, p.169; Luder's List No. 62.
of the Kapardin or bun of entwined hair on top of the head,\(^1\) which looks like a seashell. It is practically always made of red sandstone speckled with buff, characteristic of the locality. The most striking characteristic of Mathura Buddha is the fact that the transparent material covering the Master's body is draped over the left shoulder only, leaving the right shoulder bare.\(^2\) The Buddha usually sits cross-legged on a simple pedestal, which is mostly but not always supported by lions, with his right hand raised in the abhayamudra. The lower part of his crossed legs and his feet are not covered and therefore are visible [Pl. 34 and 35(a)]. The eyes are wide open and look straight at the observer.\(^3\) Over his head the artist has often depicted the Bodhi (pipal) tree. Sometimes flying figures are shown on either sides, near the top of the sculpture. In many examples two more figures, which in early sculptures clearly represent Indra and Brahma, are standing to his left and right.\(^4\) A perfectly preserved example of a seated Buddha image was found at Katra in the Mathura complex (Pl. 34).

On the other hand the characteristics of the classical Gandhara Buddha are completely different. The material used was mostly grey schist of the region in the beginning, which was gradually replaced by stucco by the 3\(^{rd}\) century A.D. The Graeco-Roman influence is clear in the facial features, wavy hair, muscular body\(^5\) and the drapery with deep rhythmic folds. Both shoulders of the Buddha are normally covered. The legs and feet are also usually covered and therefore invisible. The eyes are often half closed as if the Master is meditating.\(^6\) The figure can assume various mudras the dharmachakra mudra (teaching pose), the dhyanamudra (meditative pose) and abhayamudra. Some of the Buddha figures have a moustache. The Bodhi tree, floating divinities are missing and Indra and Brahma too are not so

---

\(^1\) J.E. Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, 'New evidence with regard to the origin of the Buddha image', SAA, 1979, pp.377-400.
\(^2\) Ibid., p.382.
\(^3\) Ibid.
\(^4\) Ibid.
common. Despite the differences there was definite exchange of sculptural traditions between the two dominant centres of art of the Kushana period. Gandhara also produced heavily ornamented Bodhisattva images, narrative sculptures of the Buddha's life and of the Jataka tales on stone friezes to decorate stupas of different sizes. While the Buddhist couriers in the form of scholars and missionaries conducted the intellectual conquest, the artists of the Mathura and Gandhara school created an atmosphere of Buddha consciousness among the masses by endearing them to the Buddha in human form. Other frequently depicted sculptural themes include the king of the Yakshas, Panchika, and his consort Hariti.

The Mathura artists also carved a large number of Bodhisattva images, Jaina images and some reliefs of scenes from the Buddha's life. The relief found at Rajghat, Mathura, depicts five major events in the life of Sakyamuni, viz. the birth, the Maravijaya, the descent from heaven, a preaching scene and the parinirvana, all arranged across the upper half of the slab, from right to left. Below each scene subsidiary elements related to the events are depicted (Pl. 35(b)). The iconographic conventions of images of many Hindu deities were established in the Kushana times. Certain groups of Mathura sculptures represent Shiva lingas, four armed Shiva, with his consort Parvati, Ganesha and Skanda, Ardhanarishvara, seated and standing Vishnu, Surya, Brahma, Agni, Ganesha, Karttika, Balarama, Nagaraj, Gaja-Lakshmi and Mother-Goddesses. The seated Surya image found at

1 J.E. Van Lohuizen-de-Leeuw, 1979, op. cit., p.383.
6 Ibid., No. D13.
7 Ibid., No. 512, 2487.
8 Ibid., No. D46.
9 Ibid., No. 382.
10 Ibid., No. 2583.
11 Ibid., No. 269.
12 Ibid., No. 2949.
13 Ibid., No. 2520, 985.
14 Ibid., No. 2317, F.38.
Kankali Tila, Mathura, depicts a moustached Sun god wearing long coat, trousers, heavy boots and a ringed crown, clearly betraying west-Asian influence.\(^1\) The extant specimens of the Mathura school point towards the emergence of vigorous theistic cults leading to the development of Shivism, Vaishnavism, Shakti worship and other religious faiths centering around the worship of Ganesha, Karttikeya, Surya, etc. Although many Yaksha, Yakshi, Naga and Nagi images are found from the Mathura region, there is a clear indication that these popular cults were gradually being pushed to the margins by the gods and goddesses of the Brahmanical tradition.\(^2\) Many of the *Shalabhanjikas*, a generic term for sensuous sculptural representation of women grasping the branch of a tree (Pl. 36(a)), found in diverse religious establishments, were actually Yakshis.\(^3\)

Innumerable well-sculpted ladies have been found from Mathura, specially Bhuteshwar and Kankali Tila, some no doubt intended for the stupa railings. These are depicted with sensuous midriff folds, broad hips, large round breasts and full thighs, possibly reflecting notions of abundance and fertility.\(^4\) These ladies are usually shown standing on a crouching figure, sometimes carrying a variety of objects, adorned with heavy girdles, necklaces, anklets, bracelets and diverse hair arrangements (Pl. 36). The explanation of their conceptualization and form lies in a heightened urban awareness of the early centuries A.D.\(^5\) The double-sided bowl support from Palikhera, Mathura, shows the king of Yakshas, Kubera, being served grape wine by figures in Hellenistic garb on one side (Pl. 37), while on the other, an apparently inebriated Kubera is supported by attendants.\(^6\) While Kubera is depicted wearing an Indian dhoti, his attendants are clad in Hellenistic garb and the wine cups show characteristically Iranian decoration. The art of Kushana period thus truly represents intermingling of various styles and


traditions. The images made in the Mathura region were exported to other cities such as Sarnath, Kausambi, Ahichchhatra, Sanghol etc.

Another important aspect of Kushana art is the emphasis on the emperor as a divine personage. Apart from the semi-divine delineation of royal portraits on their coins, we have come across life size statues of Kushana kings from Mat, near Mathura and Surkh Kotal in Afghanistan. Archaeological excavations at Mat have revealed the outlines of a large rectangular structure on a plinth, with a round sanctum consisting of two concentric rounded walls, surrounded by a number of small cells, at its western end. The shrine was probably a ceremonial site, rather than one of daily use, as suggested by its distance from the main city. Several damaged statues were found here, all outside the circular sanctum and none in-situ. Near the centre of the circular structure and along the longitudinal axis of the shrine was a headless figure, seated majestically on a throne with lion-shaped support (Pl. 32). The inscription on the base refers to the construction of a devakula (temple), garden, tank, well, assembly hall and a gateway during the reign of Maharaja, Rajatiraja, Devaputra, Kushanaputra Vamataksha who can now be identified with Wema Taktlo, father of Wema Kadphises. The figure is conceived in a frontal and stiff manner creating an imposing effect on the viewer. Nearly every element of the costume, posture and throne is of foreign type, although the workmanship and sculptural style bespeak an Indic craftsmanship. The figure is dressed in a Scythian manner with high boots and a tunic like garment. The throne accommodating the pendent leg posture is again representative of a non Indian type. Indian features include the treatment of the body forms in a generalized manner, the fullness of the body forms and the use of linear details to indicate three-dimensional elements.

1 ASIAR, 1919-20, p.26; ASIAR, 1928-29, pp.95-97.
2 G.R. Sharma, Kushana Studies, University of Allahabad, Allahabad, 1968, pp.43-47.
3 AI, No. 4, 1947, pp.119, 137.
6 ASIAR, 1911-12, p.124.
7 S. Huntington, 1985, op. cit., p.128.
8 Ibid.
such as the folds of the foot\(^1\) (Pl. 32). Moreover the use of characteristic Sikri sandstone used in the Mathura workshops attests to local production. The life size, headless, standing portrait statue of Kanishka is identified by its inscription. Kanishka is dressed as a Scythian nobleman with heavy boots, a stiff knee-length tunic and an ankle length outer robe that create an angular, almost geometric effect (Pl. 33).\(^2\) The shape of the garment is not determined by the forms of the body beneath it but seems to have its own shape.\(^3\) A strict frontality pervades the statue which is furthered by the positioning of splayed feet that are firmly planted on the ground. Kanishka's military prowess is clearly implied by his weapon attributes, as his right hand holds a long sceptre or mace resting on the ground and his left hand firmly grasped the ornamented hilt of his sword. An interesting feature of the mace is the depiction of the Indic *makara* carved near the bottom. Even in its damaged condition, the image radiates strength, power and authority.

Sophisticated styles of stone sculpture co-existed with vibrant traditions of terracotta art. The repertoire of Kushana terracottas including divine, human and animal figurines, is most varied. The terracotta art of the period is comparable with the sculptural art in depiction of worldly life with its joys and sorrows on the physical form. The ornamentation is comparatively scanty but the hair-do is elaborate as in the Kushana tradition. Most figurines are shown with ovoid face, broad nose, short forehead, prominent chin and wearing various types of headgears like the *Kullah* cap.\(^4\) Some figurines show mixed ethnic features with Hellenistic and Scythian elements reflecting the comingling of different people and cultures. Though some terracottas are refined but quite a large number of the terracottas of Kushana period betray crude workmanship. Many specimens show that the head was produced from a mould and the body was fashioned by hand. The head had a tenon which was inserted in the body and its at this point that the figurines are usually

\(^{1}\) S. Huntington, 1985, *op. cit.*, p.128.
\(^{3}\) *Ibid.*
The terracottas with religious affiliation represent a number of gods and goddesses of different pantheons including Buddhist Brahmancial like Shiva, Durga, Surya, Karttikeya, Sapta-matrikas, etc. and lesser gods like Yakshas, Gandharvas and Kinnaras. Fertility cults were very popular during this period as figurines of Naigamesa and Naigamesi, with the face of goat over human body, were modelled on a large scale and offered in cult worship. On the basis of epic mythology and ancient texts, it is suggested that the deity was worshipped to attain progeny and take care of the evil influences occurring in the form of sickness. Around a dozen such stone specimens have been discovered from Mathura. The Kushana artist should be credited with the making of inordinately large size images of clay among which those of Hariti and Panchika are common. More impressive in the hollow image of Shiva and Parvati which is now housed in Indian Museum, Calcutta. Among some specimens of rare workmanship mention should be made of a plaque from Kausambi depicting Kamadeva and the Ardhanarishvara form of Shiva from Rajghat. Besides human figurines a large number of hand-modeled animal figurines have been unearthed from Kushana levels of several sites which might have served the purpose of children's toys as some of them bear a hole. The excavations of Sugh brought to light a large number of animal figurines of elephants, rams, bulls, horses, horses with riders, lions, monkeys, dogs, birds and figure of tortoise.

A number of terracotta votive tanks have been discovered from Kushana levels of many sites in the Indian subcontinent. These artifacts are portable shrines that vary in size and shape, viz. circular or square or rectangle, and are associated with one or more of the following features:

---

1 M.K. Dhavalikar, *Historical Archaeology of India*, New Delhi, 1999, pp.185-86.
2 Ibid.
3 B.R. Mani, 'Kushana Rock Art along the Indus from Leh to Batalik', *Puratattva*, No. 31, 2000-01, p.10a.
6 Ibid.
lamp-cups and/or birds and lamps on their rim; houses built around a courtyard structure, or a structure raised on a platform supported with pillars and approached by a staircase or ladder; a lotus plant standing upright in the tank; figure of a snake, frog or fish at the base of the tank; female figures seated along the wall, carrying a child in their arm and a bowl in their lap.\(^1\) Most of the votive tanks were evidently supposed to be filled with water and circumstantial evidence shows that they were used by the Buddhist, Hindus as well as the Jainas.\(^2\) According to V.S. Agarwal this type of worship was introduced by the Parthian in India\(^3\) but John Marshall believes that it was purely Indian in tradition.\(^4\)

The Kushana period was also marked by some new architectural trends in India. The heavy diaper masonry along with semi-ashler masonry was popularised by Kushanas. While excavating Charsada in 1903, John Marshall came across Kushana structures built of regular diaper patterned masonry commonly found in Buddhist buildings of the area. Diaper pebble style masonry is also noticed in the structures of Kanispur,\(^5\) Harwan,\(^6\) and Semthan\(^7\) in Kashmir. The strong city wall of Sirsukh (Kushana city of Taxila) was constructed of rough rubble faced with neatly fitting limestone masonry of the heavy diaper type.\(^8\) This 18 feet 6 inch thick fortification wall was provided with a heavy roll plinth at the base on its outer face and semi-circular bastions at regular interval (about 90 feet) along the outer curtain. Both the wall and the bastions were furnished with loopholes with triangular tops.\(^9\) This was the fortification of a typical Kushana city.\(^10\) Similar bastions have been found during the excavation of the Kushana palace and its adjuncts at Kausambi.

---

\(^3\) V.S. Agarwal, 'Terracotta figurines of Ahichchhatra', *Ancient India*, No. 4, 1948, p.125.
\(^5\) *JAR*, 1998-99, pp.30-47.
where the Kushanas retained the old palace with some renovations and added two circular towers attached to the palace walls.\(^1\) The Kushanas made extensive use of curvilinear surfaces like roofing and bridging devices in the construction of rooms and door openings. In roofing, domes were introduced and semi-elliptical barrel-vaults were used for roofing basements. The bridging device, technically known as 'arcuation', consisting of the four-centered pointed arch and the segment arch was used in the Kushana palace architecture of Kausambi.\(^2\) In the Ganga valley, bricks were used more frequently in building than stone.\(^3\)

The Kushana period was marked by unprecedented strides in the field of urbanization, monetization and commercial transaction. It was a period of acculturation and accommodation, when several new trends were introduced and assimilated alongside earlier ones. The political unification of a large part of north India with Central Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan paved way for fruitful interactions in the field of art, architecture and religion. The blossoming of the Gandhara and Mathura schools of art and the spread of Buddhism in Central Asia has been attributed to the Kushana age. Political peace and stability, material prosperity, a vibrant society marked by religious pluralism and artistic effervescence were some of the cornerstones of Kushana rule in India.

\(^2\) B.A. Mani, 1987, op. cit., p.50.
\(^3\) Ibid., p.60.