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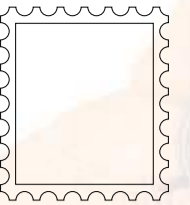
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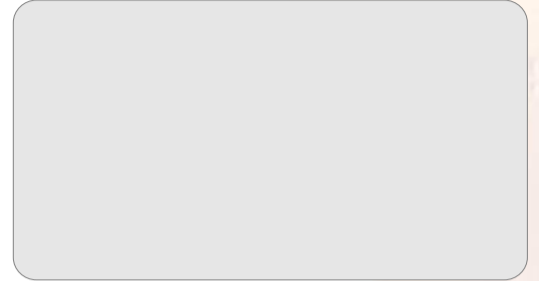
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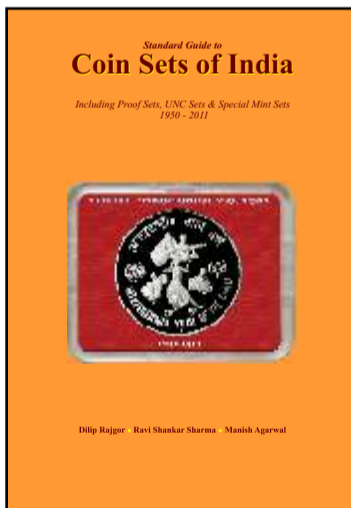
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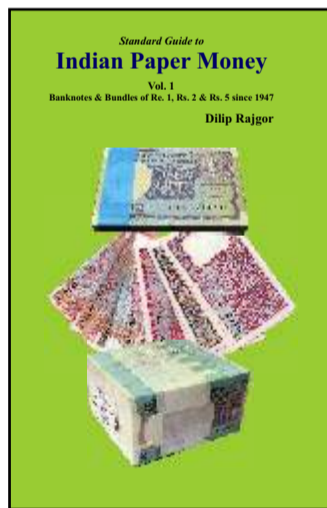
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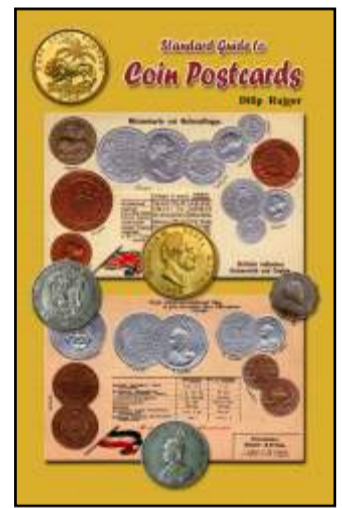
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Coins of the Nagas of Padmavati (A Mighty Kingdom that has totally been Forgotten)

By Shastri JC Philip



The field of Numismatics is full of surprising stories, and the Naga coins of Padmavati (Central India) are definitely one of them. This place has yielded hundreds of thousands of coins but it is hardly known to coin-lovers in India, let alone outside.

It is reported that one hoard contained as many as 100,000 coins in an earthen pot. Yet I have come across only one book on these coins so far, and even that book is a few decades old. So high is the ignorance about these coins that I myself did not know about them till about an year ago. As a result, in the last five years though I visited places as close as 10 kilometer to Padmavati, and that also for shooting places of historical and archaeological importance, yet I did not visit Padmavati -- because I never knew about it.

Worse, though I lived about 40 kilometers away from Padmavati (now known as Pawaya), and though I saw buses going to Pawaya almost daily, none of the passengers knew that Pawaya is an important historical place.

Today Padmavati is a rural township in Central India. However, Between AD 100 to 300 it was the capital of one of the most powerful and rich rulers in India -- the Nagas of Padmavati who were always at odds with the Aryan race that was trying to become the major power in India at that time. Eventually the Nagas lost in the struggle for power and were forced to flee to remote places in India. With that came a type of collective amnesia, and the powerful Naga people were forgotten for centuries.

Numismatics played a significant role in bringing back forgotten history, but so little work has been done after a century of discovery that even today Naga in general and Nagas of Padmavati in particular are a forgotten people. Rarely only are their coins seen with coin collectors though hundreds of thousands have surfaced due to land erosion over a century.

History of the Nagas: It seems that Nagas were a group of Mongoloids who migrated to a number of places in North India around 1000 BC. Since they were non Aryans, a tension between them and Aryan races developed in many places where they settled. It

seems that the region today known as Kashmir was probably their original home after their entry in India from North-west, or that Kashmir was the place where they has their greatest concentration in the beginning of their settlement in North India. It also seems that some of them settled as far as Nagaland in the north-east of India, and Andhra in south India, though their main areas of settlement remained the central India. Their influenced reached beyond their area of settlement, because today even Andhra, and Kerala (the southernmost state of India) have Naga temples.

They worshipped the Cobra (Nag) which also became a name to indicate this race in India. A good number of these people used Nag (Naga) as their family name. Eventually many places in India were named after this race of people. Some of these are, Nagpur, Nagardhan (Nagar-Vardhan), Nagar, Karkotnagar Nagarkhonda, Nagarkot, Nagarkoil (Nagarcoil) etc.

Puranic (history-based-mythology) literature mentions that the Naga kings ruled at Takshila, Tankshar, Singhpur, Tonk, Mathura, Karkotanagar, Mathura, Indaurpura, Padmavati, Kantipuri, Vidisa, Purika, Nagpura, Nandi-Vardhan, Eran, Paithan, etc. Most of these places are inhabited even today and these names can easily be identified with the present name. Padmavati has become Pawaya or Padm Pawaya in modern times, but the link with Padmavati is based upon numerous evidences.

From north-west the spread to north, east, central, and even southern India happened probably between 1000 BC and 300 AD. The exact time period of specific events and migration is difficult to reckon at present due to scarcity of inscriptions and also because of erroneous attribution of many artifacts discovered.

The Naga race in the North-Western India was almost completely destroyed by Janamejaya. Janamejaya was a king who belonged to the Kuru race. The Nagas that remained seem to have grown to positions of power in central and north India within a few centuries of this mass destruction. It seems that this rebound happened around AD 100 and after and also that a few decades before this the Nagas began to establish Padmavati (present name Pawaya or Padam Pawaya) as their capital.

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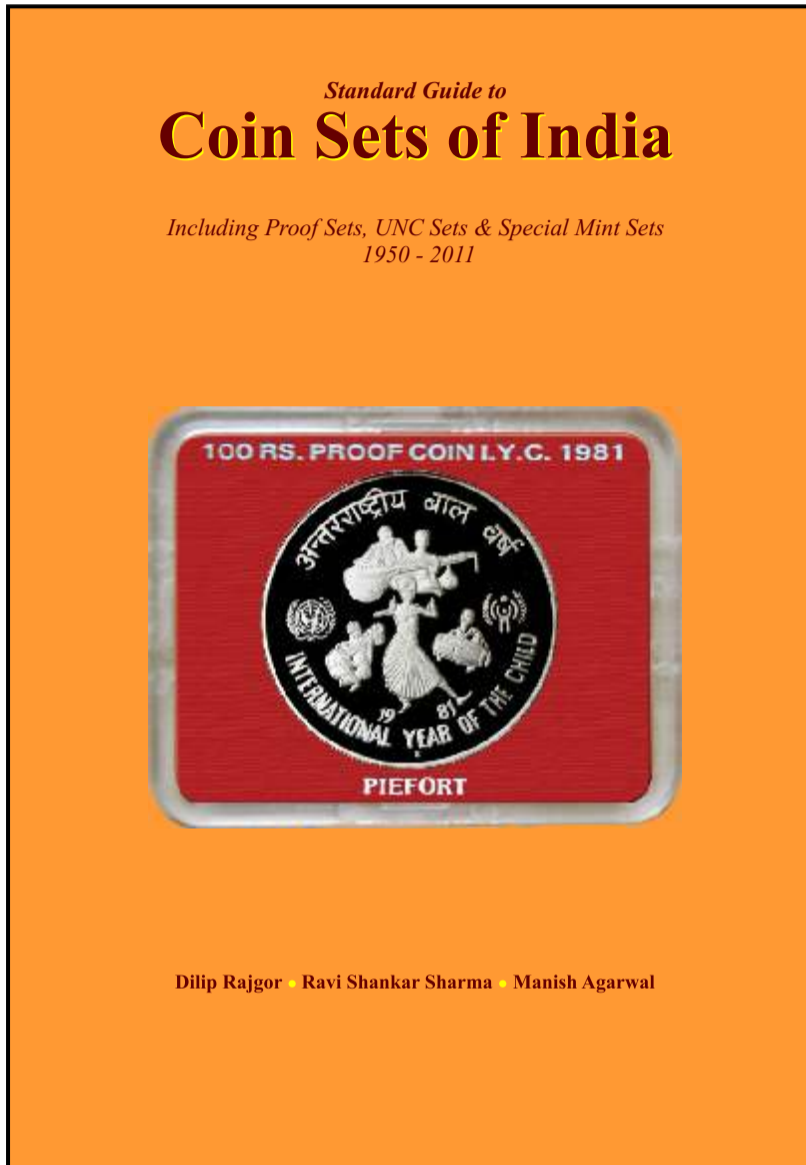
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Standard Guide to Coin Sets of India

*Including Proof Sets, UNC Sets
& Special Mint Sets 1950-2011*

by Dilip Rajgor, Ravi Shankar Sharma
& Manish Agarwal

Rs. 750/-



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Sample Page

1989 - Jawaharlal Nehru Birth Centenary - Bombay Mint

Mint Mark:

Proof: "B" below date

UNC: "U" below date



Date of Issue: 14th November, 1988

Booking Period: 1st April, 1989 to 31st July, 1989

Delivery Period: within one year from the booking date

Catalogue of Sets

RB #	Details of Proof Sets	Booking Price: ₹	Sets Sold	Rarity
134	4 coin set - 100 Rupees, 20 Rupees, 5 Rupees & Rupee - with mint emblem (in acrylic Slant)	600	NA	15,000
135	4 coin set - 100 Rupees, 20 Rupees, 5 Rupees & Rupee - with mint emblem (in acrylic case)	500	NA	12,000
136	2 coin set - 100 Rupees & 20 Rupees - with single mint emblem (in acrylic case)	425	NA	7,000
137	Single coin set - 100 Rupees (in acrylic case)	350	NA	10,000

RB #	Details of Uncirculated Sets	Booking Price: ₹	Sets Sold	Rarity
138	4 coin set - 100 Rupees, 20 Rupees, 5 Rupees & Rupee (in acrylic case)	550	NA	7,500
139	2 coin set - 100 Rupees & 20 Rupees (in acrylic case)	300	NA	6,500
140	Single coin set - 100 Rupees (in acrylic case)	250	NA	4,000
141	Single coin set - 20 Rupees (in acrylic case)	50	NA	3,000

Details of Coins

Denomination	Metal	Weight (g)	Size (mm)	Shape	Edge / Serrations
100 Rupees	S50	35	44	Circular	Milled / 200
20 Rupees	CN	25	39	Circular	Milled / 180
5 Rupees	CN	12.5	31	Circular	Security edge / 150
1 Rupee	CN	6	26	Circular	Security edge / 205

Note: Bombay mint marked a special mark "U" below date in UNC coins.

Five Rupee coin blanks with security edge were imported from the Birmingham Mint, England & struck in India.

The earliest rulers seem to be Bhuta Nandi or Bhutinandi, Sisunandi and Yasonandi. A statue of Yaksha Manibhadra was dedicated in the fourth year of the reign of "King Svami Sivanandi" and it seems that a statue in the archeological museum might be of this Yaksha. Similarly a famous Sivalinga called Swarn-Vindu was also established there. The platform of the Swarn-Vindu Siva has been discovered at Pawaya. An image of Nandi, with human body and Bull's head has been found there. All of these point to the rule of the Nandi kings mentioned above. Some coins in the British Museum seems to have come from their reign, but it seems they have been classified erroneously to other dynasties and further research is awaited for confirmation.

According to tentative identification, a series of coins in British museum which are generally assigned to Mathura actually belong to Padmavati. It is also reported that in the British Museum there are coins of Seshadata, Ramdata and Sisuchandradata. The script of the Seshadata's coin seems to be the oldest and the coins in all probability belong to the first century BC. In the same series, there are coins of Ramadata. These coins probably are identical with Seshanaga, Ramchandra and Sisu Nandi of this dynasty. The following is a tentative chronology which needs further research for confirmation.

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| (1) Sesa Naga | 110-90 BC |
| (2) Bhogin | 90-80 BC |
| (3) Ramachandra | 80-50 BC |
| (4) Dharma Varman | 50-40 BC |
| (5) Vangara | 40-31 BC |

The above ruled at Vidisa before the decline of the Sunga race. The following rulers came to power after the Satavahanas destroyed Sunga rulers:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| (6) Bhuta Nandi | 20-10 BC |
| (7) Shisu Nandi | 10 BC-25 AD |
| (8) Yash Nandi | 25~0 AD |

There is plenty of evidence that the above kings ruled at Padmavati after the end of Sungas and that they consolidated themselves during this period. Immediately after them came the following rulers:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| (9) Purushadata | (10) Uttamdata |
| (11) Kamadata | (12) Bhavadata |
| (13) Shiva Nandi or Shivadata | (78 AD) |

The Naga kings from 9 to 13 are known from the inscriptions and coins but their exact order of succession is totally uncertain at present. In AD 78, Shiva Nandi or Shivadata was superseded by the Kushanas who circulated their coins in this region. However, eventually the Nagas of Padmavati regained power and there begins the major period of their history in that place (today known as Pawaya or Padam Pawaya). Vast hoards of coins have been discovered from the period after Shiva Nandi, and they in turn have given the names of 11 kings, listed further down in this article.

Archeology of History of the Later Nagas Of Padmavati: Many places in India indicate continuous occupation since at least 2000 BC or before, and a Kingdom known as the Nagas of Padmavati is one of them. In spite of continuous occupation now for at least four millennia, very few artifacts and inscriptions have survived due to the severity of the climate which gradually reduces sandstone structures into dust. What is more, land erosion during rains and landfilling during floods have also wiped out habitation after habitation, very few of which have ever been discovered.

That there were thickly populated townships in this region is deduced not because many of the original towns could be unearthed, but mainly due to inscriptional, religious, and numismatic evidences. Some inscriptions have been discovered, and also numerous references to the Naga kings and kingdoms are available in the ancient religious literature (puranas). However, what came as a surprise around a century ago was the large number of coins people were able pick up from eroded ground after each season of rain.

Background - Gwalior Coins: Naga coins of Padmavati are part of the larger family known as Gwalior Coins. Coins of Gwalior form a special family among the Indian coins. This is because coinage from Gwalior had some form of coinage other continually for the last 2000 years. These represent more than a dozen coin families and numerous dynasties.

So wide is the range of Gwalior coins, and so numerous are the types, that it has taken coin-lovers more than a century to put the history together, and much is missing in spite of that. Some of these coins are known only from oral or written sources, but specimens have not been discovered yet. Archaeological excavation is going on in numerous places in the Gwalior region and this is expected, among other things, to bring forth many coins that are not known yet.

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Gwalior is a prominent place in the north of Madhya Pradesh, north of Jhansi and south of Agra. The whole of the Jhansi to Mathura region (north of Agra) was ruled two millennia ago by the powerful Naga kings. But today Padmavati is a totally unknown place, in one of the remote and unimportant villages.

Coins of Nagas of Padmavati: Based upon the stone age implements discovered, it is clear that the Gwalior region was inhabited from ancient times. There are references to this region and its people in Indian epics. For example, during the Mahabhabharat period Gwalior was hinted as a place situated in between the Surasena and Chedi janapadas. There is also indication that Kunti the mother of the Pandavas was the daughter of Kuntibhoj who was the ruler of this region. During the Mauryan period this region came under their dominion.

The earliest documentary evidence about rulers available is that of the Naga kings of the Padmavati and Narwar region which are places only about 50 kilometers away from the present Gwalior city, and are inhabited today even two millennia after the original Naga rule. The Naga kings were powerful men and they ruled a wide region that extended up to Vidisha in the south and Mathura in the North.

For a short period the Naga region came under the dominion of the Kushana as shown by a large number of gold and copper Kushana coins discovered from this region. However, by the third century AD the Nagas had united and pushed them out of this region to regain autonomy.

Very little inscriptional documentation is available from this period, but Naga coins have come to the rescue of numismatists and students. Almost all of them contain inscriptions on the periphery of the reverse. While no single coin depicts the complete inscription, because the flan is always smaller than the die, the number of Naga coins discovered is so numerous (hundreds of thousands) that piecing together names has become easy.

So far they have revealed the names of 11 rulers. In chronological sequence these are:

- Vrishabh Nag
- Bhim Nag

- Skand Nag
- Vasu Nag
- Brahaspati Nag
- Vibhu Nag
- Ravi Nag
- Bhavan Nag
- Prabhakar Nag
- Dev Nag
- Ganapati Nag

The hundreds of thousands of coins discovered of Naga kings are all of copper, circular, and 1 centimeter or less in diameter. Naga coins of precious metals have not been discovered so far and we do not know if they ever issued coins made of gold or silver.

It seems that the Naga empire was overtaken by Gupta kings. There is a pillar inscription at Allahabad that suggests that Samudragupta completely annihilated the Nag rule during the time of Ganapati Nag.

The Coins: The Padmavati region started yielding coins in the 1800s when rains started to erode the present high level of mud. Villages started finding these coins each year after the rains, and soon some non Indian numismatists started taking interest in these coins. Subsequently many collections have been discovered from this place.

Naga coins of Padmavati are mostly copper, and mostly circular, about one centimeter in diameter. The circular shape seems more an accident than planned because one can discern three to four corners in many of these coins. These are some of the smallest coins from North India, where the coinage tends to be of larger size than corresponding South Indian coinage.


Humped bull was a common theme, though it was not the only theme that one sees on these coins. One can also see wheel, linga, horse, triangular banner, peacock etc. You can see a set of six coins with the humped bull. I have considerably enlarged one of these coins (original size only 10 mm) so you can see the contours of the humped bull. The picture is only partial on most coins and one has to sort through dozens of coins to find one that can show the humped bull so clearly.



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No.	King	Picture:		Obverse			
01	Bhava Naga	Bull	xx	Trident	xx	xx	Crest xx
02	Bhima Naga	xx	xx	xx	Peacock	xx	xx xx
03	Brihaspati Naga	Bull	Wheel	Trident	Peacock	xx	xx xx
04	Deva Naga	Bull	Wheel	Trident	xx	xx	xx xx
05	Ganapati Naga Horse	Bull Tree	Wheel	xx	xx	xx	Prancing
06	Prabhakara Naga	Bull	xx	xx	xx	Battle Axe	Lion xx
07	Ravi Naga	Bull	xx	xx	xx	Battle Axe Standard Standard	Triangular Triangular
08	Skanda Naga Horse	Bull xx	xx	xx	Peacock	xx	Prancing
09	Vasu Naga	xx	Wheel	xx	Peacock	xx	xx xx
10	Vibhu Naga	Bull	Wheel	xx	xx	Battle Axe	Crest Linga
11	Vrishabha Naga	Bull	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx xx
12	Vyaghra Naga	xx	Wheel	xx	xx	xx	xx xx

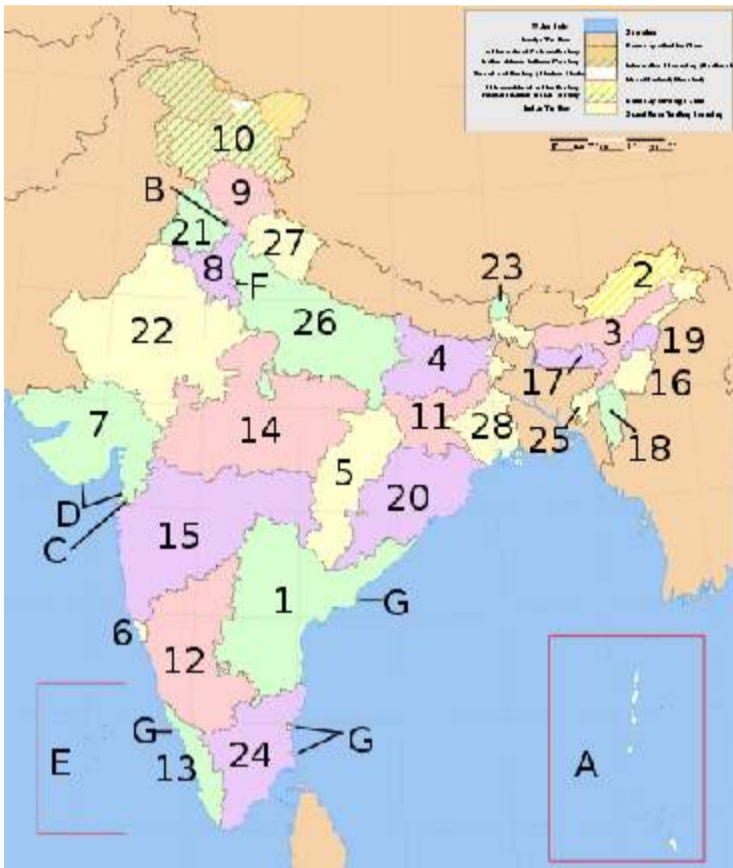
Reverse of the above Coins

Inscription: The name of the King along with the title in Brahmi script covering the whole flan of coin in circular layout

Conclusion: The Nagas of Padmavati were a powerful ruling family and their coins do need more attention that what they have received so far. Most coins within India are now lying in obscure places in archaeological museums which are not easily available to students. A large number of these coins have also reportedly been shipped to sellers and collectors outside India. As a result, we need a team of dedicated numismatists to get some substantial publications on the Naga coins of Padmavati.

Picture Legends

1. Naga coin
2. Enlarged Naga coin with humped bull
3. India: The Nagas entered India via region 21. Initially they settled in region 10, from where they spread as far as region 1 and 1 and even 13. The revived Naga Empire (Padmavati) was at the North of region 14. Map in GNU Copyright: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:India-states-numbered.svg>



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Calendar of Events 2010-11

Month	Date	Place	Event	Venue
December	3-5	Pune	CoinEx - Pune 2010	International Collectors' Society of Rare Items
December	10-12	New Delhi	Stamps of India 2010	National Exhibition, NSIC Exhibition Ground, New Delhi (sine@stampsfindia.com)
December	16-19	Mumbai	2nd Museum Coin Fair	2nd All-India Numismatic Conference and Museum Coin Fair, Dinesh Mody Numismatic Museum (drajgor@hotmail.com)
December	24-26	Kolkata	14th Coin Exhibition & Conference	Numismatic Society of Calcutta, Haldiram's Banquet
January	22-23	Rajapalayam	21st Annual Conference	South Indian Numismatic Society, at Rajapalayam Raju's College, 86 km SW of Madurai, Tamil Nadu
January	24-26	Nagpur	NagMoney 2010	Numismatic Research Institute, Mor Bhavan, Jhansie Rani Square, Sitabuldi, Nagpur (093255 68570)
February	11-13	Ahmedabad	Coinex 2011	Gujarat Coin Society, Ahmedabad
February	12-18	New Delhi	INDIPEX- 2011	World Philatelic Exhibition, India Post-PCI-FIP-FIAP

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Anti-Forgery Bureau

These are new tooled forgeries of 1955 coins of 1 Anna and 2 Annas. The common coins of 1954 have been tooled and the 4 of the year has been replaced by 5 from another coin making them into rare coins. Collectors Beware!



Photo Feature



Mr. Mahesh Kalra receiving his M. A. degree in Numismatics & Archaeology from Dr. Rajan Welukar, the Hon. Vice Chancellor of the University of Mumbai. Mahesh stood first in the MA from the Dinesh Mody Institute for Numismatics and Archaeology, and ranked 3rd in all the faculties in MA.

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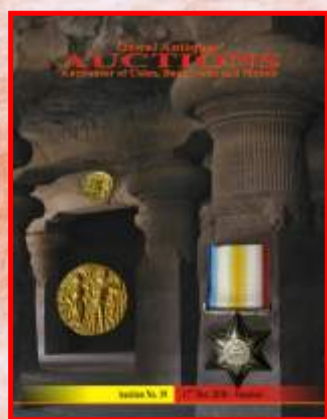
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