The economic history of ancient southeast Asia is only now beginning to benefit from methodological advances made by archaeologists and anthropologists. Friedman, in particular, has established a model for the evolution of the state from tribal structures:

The 'Asiatic' state evolves directly out of tribal structures in the process of verticalization of the relations of production... Relative rank is first established by horizontal exchange, then converted to absolute rank through claims on the supernatural. With the continued growth of surplus and the emergence of the state, the political hierarchy which had formerly been generated by the economic flows of horizontal exchange comes, finally, to dominate that flow. The chief who becomes a sacred king naturally appropriates all of the community rituals... The head of the state climbs a great deal further up the ancestral hierarchy—he is no longer the representative of the community to the gods, but descends from the heavens as the representative of the gods to the community.

The economic implications of the transformation of tribal chief to divine king have been explored by Wheatley, who sees the process as a result of Indian cultural influence which brought about 'a super-ordinate redistributive system of integration'.

This paper seeks to examine the nature of the coins which appear following the formation of the 'Indianized' urban centres: Oc-Eo, the 'Mon' cities of Thailand and southern Burma, the Pyu cities of Beikthano, Halin and Śrīksetra, and the northern Arakanese cities of Dhanavyati and Vaiśāli. Earlier scholars considered the coins to be medals bearing religious symbols. However, it will be shown that these coins were issued by kings with the intent not only to centralize and expand the economy, but also to enhance their position at the head of it.

The organization of a central authority dependent, to a certain extent, on Indian tradition for its mandate to rule and on external trade for its wealth, encouraged the evolution of a

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3 Southeast Asian numismatic studies have been few and far between. Malleret (ADOM III, pp. 131 ff.) gives a fairly comprehensive bibliography. The Arakanese coins are catalogued in my unpublished doctoral thesis, "Ancient Arakan" (ANU, 1976). M. Mitchener has recently attempted a comparative assessment in his "Some early Arakan and Pyu-Mon coins", JNSI vol. XXXIV, pp. 47-59; however, his evidence is incomplete.

currency based on the Indian model. All the coins found to date bear auspicious symbols of Indian kingship and its function of assuring the prosperity of the realm, and an examination of these motifs will elucidate their origins and diffusion.

The earliest references to a coin currency in southeast Asia are, of course, to be found in Chinese sources. The description of foreign countries of T’ung-tien, compiled by Tu Yu in the late eighth century A.D., has a section devoted to T’ou-ho, which Yamamoto has identified as Dwāravati. Tu Yu recorded that if a man casts silver coins without permission, his arm is to be cut off, implying that the minting of coins was a state concession. He notes further that in the six markets (or cities), everyone uses silver coins which are small like elmsseeds. Yamamoto has observed that while the Chinese coins of the time were about 25 millimetres (mm) in diameter, the coins attributed to Dwāravati were often as small as 14 mm.

To-ho-lo or Tu-ho-lo, long identified as Dwāravati, according to the T’ang histories, adjoined the country of Chia-lo-shē-fo where the regular tax levied was two silver coins. The New T’ang History mentions that the neighbouring Pyus “makes coins from silver and gold, shaped like the half-moon called teng-chia-t’o or tzu-u-t’an-t’o” (登差圳, or 人彈院) while the Man-shu only mentions silver. Although no gold coins have yet been discovered at Pyu sites, a single specimen exists in the British Museum Collection (BMC). Temple took teng-chia-t’o to be a transliteration of the Sanskrit tanka, “a weight or stamped coin”. The same word survives in many of the old western languages of Burma (including Sak and Chin), where it usually means silver. While all the extant Pyu coins are round, the half-moon shape may have been the result of clipping them into smaller denominations, a practice known in Funan and Arakan. Luce noted that Old Burmese (OB) kl̄yap, used in Pagan inscriptions to denote a quantity of silver used for commercial exchange, ought to mean something pressed between two surfaces. The use of die-struck coins seems to have disappeared with the fall of the early Indianized kingdoms: the last coins we have from Arakan belong to the ninth or tenth centuries, roughly contemporary with the Mon coins from Pegu, and use of a coin currency apparently dwindled to nothing during the Pagan period; there are no local coins from the rest of mainland southeast Asia after the fall of Funan and Dwāravati, their function being replaced by barter, cowrie shells, and standardized metal bars or lumps. The reason for the absence of coins in the later southeast Asian centres of Angkor, Sukhothai and Pagan

7 Yamamoto, op. cit., following Pelliot and Luce, identifies Chia-lo-shē-fo as Kâlaśapura (“City of pots”) mentioned in the Kâlaśaparâśayya (Tawney’s trans., vol. I, p. 530). An unpublished fragmentary Sanskrit inscription, discovered at Srisaket in 1970, mentions Kâlaśapura a number of times, which is interesting especially in the light of Luce’s suggestion (“Countries neighbouring Burma”, JBRS XIV, ii, p. 182, n. 2) that Chia-lo-shē-fo could be the Chia-lo-p’o-t’i mentioned first in the list of kingdoms subject to the Pyu.
10 “Economic life of the early Burman”, JBRS XXX (1940), n. 87.
is beyond the scope of this paper. Briefly, it would appear that surplus wealth during this period was redistributed through the great monastery and temple complexes which had emerged, rather than through the court as in the earlier period. Coins began to come into use again only in the fourteenth century, probably through the influence of Muslim and, later, European traders.

Metal and weight standards

Apart from the general description of ‘silver’ for the Mon and Pyu coins, no other satisfactory data are available. A series of early Arakanese silver coins in my collection when tested showed practically no impurities. The coins of Harikela, a state in southeast Bengal which used Arakanese currency as a model, are initially all silver. A single gold and a few copper specimens of Harikela coins were found in later levels of the Salban Vihāra excavations, reflecting the influence of Indian currency during this period (circa seventh/eighth centuries). Mallaret identified a number of silver-mine sites in Indochina, and the silver mines of northern Burma are well known and probably supplied the Pyus with their needs. The Mons of southern Burma may have obtained their silver from Bassein. While no comprehensive geological survey of Arakan has been undertaken to date, tradition has it that there are gold and silver mines.

The initial exploitation of southeast Asian silver for export can be seen as a direct result of the abrupt cessation of the Roman bullion trade with India in the middle of the first century A.D. Silver coins, both local and Roman, are absent from the Indian assemblage immediately after this period. Wheeler has shown that Roman coins were used not as an imposed currency, but as bullion of a quality and weight guaranteed by the imperial stamp. The Roman weight standard of 8.035 grams (g) was adopted by the Kusaṇas and by the early Guptas. Unfortunately, reliable records of weight of early south Indian coins are not available.
but it appears that some of the early uninscribed coins of southeast Asia could have conformed to the Roman standard. The Burmese weight standard, the viss (OB: pisd, sd), is derived from the Tamil visai "division", and OB: buih, probably one tenth of a viss, from Pali-Tamil pala21. This is interesting in that the early southeast Asian coin types seem to have been based on south Indian models.

Although the weights of the early southeast Asian coins are rarely recorded, the scanty evidence we have suggests that the weight standard was fairly uniform throughout the area, and fell gradually as silver became scarcer. The bhadraptiha-śrivatsa coins from Pyu sites in BMC weigh, on average, 10.5g, 5.05g and 2.7g. The BMC sun/śrivatsa coins from Burma average 9.9g, while those from Oc-Ēo vary from 9.6 to 7.8g, averaging approximately 8.4g, close to the Roman standard22. One coin of the same type from Dvāravatī weighs 7.5g23. Two specimens "from Burma" in the Indian Museum Collection weigh 7.9g24. Of the the sankha ("conch")/śrivatsa coins found principally at Mon sites, the BMC Pegu specimens weigh 9.9g and 9.8g, one from Thailand described by Guehler 8.8g25 and two examples from Oc-Ēo 8.6g26. The recent discoveries from Thailand mentioned above introduce three new braciated varieties of the conch with a śrivatsa enclosing a vajra on the reverse coin. The largest weight between 3.054 and 4.5g, indicating a half size. The next size, with a mere indication of a śrivatsa on the reverse, weigh between 0.46 and 0.59g, while the smallest are merely from 0.106g to about 0.06g, that is, a mere hundredth of the standard weight. This would indicate the use of coins for smaller everyday transactions as Tu Yu indeed recorded. A conch and śrivatsa coin from Arakan in the British Museum Collection, possibly inscribed with "DEVA", weighs 5g, conforming to what must be the early Pyu standard. Of the earlier Arakan bull śrivatsa coins, a half-size specimen also issued by Devacandra (fl.c. 454–76) in the British Museum Collection weighs 4.73g, suggesting a full size of about 9.5g27. The standard appears to have fallen again during the reign of Bhumi or Bhūticandra when the sizes of the coins changed. The succeeding Candra kings struck coins to a standard of about 7.6g and were followed in this by the early kings of Harikela in southeast Bengal, who issued identical coins. The later Harikela kings again lowered the standard to between 7.2 and 7.0g28. The large number of clipped coins in the Arakan collection also indicates that as the weight standard decreased in the later period coins were clipped to conform to the lower standard. The latest Arakanese coins, issued by Śrī Singhagāndacandra towards the end of the ninth century, are a crude mixture of approximately 80 per cent silver and 20 per cent copper, probably heated over a low fire as there is little diffusion of metals. The debased quality of these is a reflection of the precarious position of this little-known dynasty.

22 ADM, t. III, p. 137; cf. G. Groslier, Recherches sur les cambodgiens (Paris, 1921), p. 32, figs. 8 and 9, and pp. 37-38, who describes two coins of this type weighing 7.7g and 9.7g.
26 ADM, t. III, p. 135.
27 C.A. Rustom, loc. cit.
It is also significant that the early southeast Asian coins were executed at a comparable technical standard to the coins of the early Pallavas, a series unequalled before or after in south Indian numismatics for clarity of design and finish. Production techniques of these double die-struck coins in all probability did not change much over the centuries. In this context it is interesting to note Paton’s description of the mint at Mrohaung (‘Arakan’) at the beginning of the nineteenth century 29.

The mint was in Arakan, and any person was allowed to take bullion to it, for the purpose of being coined, paying five per cent of the state: the process of coining was very tedious; the silver after being melted, was cut into small pieces, then weighed and beat out to the proper size: the coin was then placed between two dyes, and with the stroke of a heavy hammer, the impression was effected:

Wicks has admirably described the technique of producing the braciated coins from Thailand in his paper.

Origins and significance of the symbols

The introduction of a standardized metal currency was the result of trade with India, and Indian symbols of kingship and prosperity were borrowed to legitimize the function of the coinage. These symbols, recognized in Indian numismatics as dynastic emblems and religious or auspicious motifs, generally derive from the ancient collection of signs denoting fertility and prosperity. As these were gradually incorporated into the symbolism of kingship and into the Hindu tradition, their function is often misinterpreted. The conch, for instance, is usually seen as an indication of Vaisnavism, but was originally a water symbol connected with fertility and used in royal lustration ceremonies. As such it was used by Buddhist kings and later in Buddhist ritual.

Although Malleret has summarized the various interpretations of symbols used on early southeast Asian coins, his concern to emphasize the Scythian connection with Funan and his assumption that all the early coins originated thence has biased his interpretation. There is no doubt that motifs used by the ‘Scythian’ kings in India found their way to southeast Asia. These included the beaded surround, the conch shell with or without protruding flora, the rayed wheel of the sun, the ankusa, swastika, and auxiliary sun and moon motifs. Most of these elements, however, were present on the early Indian punch-marked coins and simply belong to a common tradition. ‘Scythian’ features like the beaded surround were adopted by the Gupta kings and by the early Pallavas. The early southeast Asian coins have more in common with the latter: neither use the likeness of the king, or even anthropomorphic depictions of gods; the coins are often not inscribed and there are no indications of mint markings.

The symbols used can be divided into three groups. It is possible that the main motif on the obverse is a dynastic emblem. This is certainly the case with the main series of Arakanese coins, where the king’s name is inscribed above a recumbent bull. The Pyu coins have two dominant obverse motifs, a rising sun and a bhadrapitha ‘throne’. It has been suggested that

30 ADM, t. III, pp. 133 ff.
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the Vikramas and Varmans of the Pyu epigraphs were tanists dividing the state between them. These two motifs, therefore, may imply that each had a different dynastic emblem. As these types are widely spread, not only over Pyu sites (where they are most numerous) but also as far east as Oc-Éo, it is possible that neighbouring countries may have imitated the emblems, as indeed Harikela borrowed the Arakanese bull. The majority of coins found in Thailand have a conch on the reverse, suggesting that this was a Mon emblem. Each of the main series of coins has on the reverse a variation of the śrīvatsa motif. This is intimately connected with the function of the king, and is discussed in detail below. Thirdly, many of the coins have a number of secondary motifs, some connected with kingship: vajra, bhadrapiṇṭha, danda, ankuśa, cânāra, etc.; and others associated with Purānic (and hence Buddhist) cosmology: sun and moon, the four great continents, the seven great rivers and the ocean, the last represented by a series of wavy lines, a fish, a tortoise or a lotus. The last two groups, especially, can be shown to illustrate the microcosmic character of the king, and his role as guarantor of the country’s prosperity. A description of the main symbols is necessary to establish their origins, meanings and connections.

Motifs

Śrīvatsa

Figure I. The common link between all the coins from Oc-Éo to Arakan is the śrīvatsa motif, which appears on the reverse of all the early examples in different forms. The significance of the symbol is important, as it explains, in part, the diversity of forms it takes, the identification of which has confused most scholars.

Śrīvatsa may be taken to mean the symbol of the abode of Śrī, the ancient mother goddess, promoter of fertility and prosperity. The śrīvatsa itself is common to Buddhist and Hindu iconography, and is foremost among the symbols of Indian kingship. The anthropomorphic equivalent is the well-known abhiśeka of Śrī, commonly depicted in Indian and southeast Asian sculpture as the goddess, seated on a lotus, being sprayed by two elephants. As a symbol, it is noticed on the earliest coins of India, among the symbols of early Buddhist and Jain aniconic art, and on the chest of Viṣṇu images. In paleography, the symbol was used together with the svastika to denote the formula ‘Svasti Śrī’ at the beginning of inscriptions. When a worthy king was crowned, Śrī was considered to enter him to ensure the fertility and wealth of the country.

While forms of the symbol may have derived from the ‘double Y’ on the Taxila coins, or the ‘nāga symbol’ of the northern tribal coins (no. 5), it first appears in its usual ‘shield’ form on Kharavela’s first-century B.C. inscription at Udayagiri cave in Orissa (no. 1), and on the famous torana at Sanchi (no. 2). The immediate prototype for the southeast Asian form is found on coins from Chandravalli, in Chitaldrug District of northern Karnataka.


32 The different interpretations (e.g. Śiva’s trident, nāga symbol, ornamental trisula, shield, fire altar, vardhamana) have been discussed by U Mya, op. cit., p. 333; Mallaret, ADM, t. III, p. 134; R.D. Banerjea, The Development of Hindu Iconography (Calcutta, 1956), pp. 190 and 376.

33 E.G. Raghuvamsa, III, 36; VI, 29; XVII, 46; XVIII, 8.
features and a prominent necklace are also apparent (nos. 9 and 10-12). U Aung Thaw has remarked on the many parallels between the culture of this region and that of early Pyu sites. The 'śrivatsa' and rising sun' coins common to Oc-Eo, U Thong, Beikthano, Halin and Śrīkṣetra, have the typical shield outline enclosing a stylized human figure. We are tempted to identify this with Śrī herself, as in early medieval south Indian sculpture the 'shield' form of the śrivatsa symbol becomes an image in its own right. Here, the curved ends of the symbol simulate the arms and legs, the upper point is rounded and crowned, and facial features and a prominent necklace are also apparent (nos. 9 and 10-12).

As the coin types became regionalized, the centre symbol took different forms. In the typical Dvāravatī coins it looks like a bunch of three stalks, tied in the centre (nos. 20, 25, 26); Malleret has identified this as a vajra. The Halin and Śrīkṣetra series have nine dots, arranged in groups of three (nos. 18, 19) which may be of cosmological significance. Yet another type found at Pyu sites has, within the śrivatsa outline, a symbol identified by Guehler as the 'moon, sun and fire' representation of the sacred syllable Oṃ (no. 27). The type found mainly on specimens from Lower Burma, generally known as 'Pegu' coins, shows a close connection (through the śankha symbol on the reverse) with the coins from Mon sites in Thailand, but has, within the outline, a symbol identified by Johnston as the anikūsa (no. 28). The transition from the śrivatsa outline with an enclosed symbol to the tripartite form can be traced in Pyu coins of the fifth century and later. Initially, the figure within the surround common in the earlier coins becomes a dot, line and triangle seen in a single coin at Beikthano (no. 15, cf. 7, 14). An almost identical form is found on the earliest coins from Arakan, issued by

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35 Historical Sites in Burma (Rangoon, 1973), pp. 64 ff.

36 Banerjea, op. cit., p. 376 and pl. XIX, figs. 1, 2 and 3; Sivaramamurti, Aspects of Indian Culture (New Delhi, 1969), pp. 51-2, fig. 42.

37 ADM, t. III, pp. 130 ff.

38 The nine dots on the Pyu coins may be connected with the nine-stone ornament of later Burmese art (see J. Lowry, Burmese Art [London, 1974], pls. 30, 32 and accompanying text). Lowry notes that "in Burma, the seven planets are increased to nine with the addition of Rahu and Keik ... In a deified form, all nine play their part in the ceremony of the Nine Gods, in which eight are placed around Keik at the cardinal and inter mediate points of the compass ... "


40 Phayre, Coins of Arakan ..., p. 33 and pl. IV, 6, 7.

41 Johnston, op. cit., p. 384. Malleret (ADM, t. III, p. 132) disagreed with this interpretation, although identical forms of the elephant god are common in the Oc-Eo assemblage, on cameos, and, significantly, on gaming dice which also bear other auspicious symbols: the vase, pair of fishes, conch, sun, swastika and śrivatsa. Cf. his pl. LXXIII (no. 1308) and pl. X in t. III.

42 The Beikthano coin was found within the rubble filling of stupa KKG 3. Stylistically, it shows a development from the Halin type, and was found together with a coin of the Śrīkṣetra type. The last phase of occupation at Beikthano and the first at Śrīkṣetra, was during the fifth century. See U Aung Thaw, Report on the Excavations at Beikthano (Rangoon, 1969), p. 54 and figs. 84, 3.
Devacandra (c. 454-476 A.D.). Here, the upper corners are rounded and there is a protuberance at the apex (no. 23). In the Pyu coins, the central triangle becomes a cylinder, pointed at the top, mounted on a base and with four dots at each side (no. 7), a symbol variously described as a Śiva linga or a representation of the Bawbawgyi stupa\(^43\). In Arakan, however, the central triangle becomes a diamond shape, which, in the later coins of Devacandra, evolves into a vertical extending from the base line, broadening to a diamond at the centre and at the apex (nos. 16, 21-23).

The transition to the tripartite form of śrivatsa can also be seen in India at this period. A variant of the protruding triangle type is found on terracotta sealings from Basarh, in strata datable between the fourth and sixth centuries\(^44\). The tripartite form is also used on sealings found in the same context, and on the chest of Viśṇu images in the Gupta idiom of the fifth century\(^45\). An almost identical form of the developed Arakan tripartite śrivatsa is found on a rare coin type from southern India\(^46\). Here, the symbol has the outer members curved outwards and up, where on the coins they twist under. The central member of both has the two diamond shapes; the south Indian coin, however, has no surrounding foliage but there is some indication of a three-stalked lotus base (no. 24). Significantly, the obverse has a humped bull, as do all the Arakan coins from Devacandra onwards\(^47\). In most Indian coins of this period and later, however, the anthropomorphic form of Śrī was used in preference to the symbol reflecting the form of Hindu revivalism at this time.

Bladgen suggested that ‘śrivatsa’ is a corruption of śrī-vajra\(^48\), which seems feasible in the light of the Mon śrī-vajra coins. The vajra is well known as a symbol of royal power. The word śrivatsa appears to have been current by the Gupta period when it appears in the Visnu.dharmottaram. It is likely that the early shield form of the symbol simply denoted Śrī. As the king came to be seen as the abode of Śrī, the śrivatsa was principally associated with royalty, and was used to indicate both the divine nature of kings and the royal nature of gods. The concept of the ‘abode of Śrī’ survives in the modern Burmese name for the symbol, ʔim niwan: ‘auspicious house’.

It should be noted that, after the earliest coins, a water symbol appears under the śrivatsa in various forms. On the Halin coins, this is usually two curved lines, developing into three or four wavy lines on the Śrīkṣetra examples. The large coin from U Thong has a fish, while

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\(^{43}\) Cf. the drawing of a small coin found at Beikthano in LA LVII, pl. III, a moulded terracotta disc from Śrīkṣetra, ASI, 1910-11, pp. 90 ff. and pl. XVIII, 9, 10, and coins found in Bawbawgyi reliquaries, Arch. Negr. 904/5 (1910-11), 987/8 (1911-12). A single specimen is also known from Halin, acquired by the Burma Historical Commission from a villager of Tagantha, north of the old city.


\(^{45}\) Sivaramamurti, loc. cit.


\(^{47}\) Ramayya, on the basis of an almost totally illegible inscription attributed the coin to “the Pallava feudatories at Kanchi, probably about the time of Yajna Satakarni towards the close of the second century A.D.” That the coin belongs to an early Pallava series is certain, but in view of the use of the bull, the Pallava emblem, and the nature of the symbol on the reverse, it should perhaps be attributed the Prakrit Pallava of the fourth or fifth centuries.

\(^{48}\) Letter to Luce, dated 12 December 1920.
the early Arakan coins have a number of vertical lines suggesting a (lotus) stem. This idea is carried further with the foliage sprouting from the top and sides of the śrīvatsa outline. In the later Arakanese coins, the stem is replaced by a row of dots, an accepted rendition of the lotus base indicating the presence of a divinity, in this case the goddess Śrī. The water symbols at the base of these coins supplement the sun and moon symbols nearly always present at the top, and would seem to be connected with the cosmological functions of the king.

Śaṅkha

Figure 2. The conch shell, saṅkha, belongs to the ancient groups of water symbols found among the āstānīdhī of Śrī Lākṣmī, and later incorporated into the iconography of Kubera, god of wealth, and of Viṣṇu. Common on the seals found at Basarh, Nalanda and Pharpapur of the Gupta period and later, it is usually identified as the Pañcājanya saṅkha of Viṣṇu. This is by no means justified where evidence of a Vaisnīvite context is lacking. On coins, the appearance of the saṅkha may indicate the wealth bestowed by Śrī, who, as we have seen, resided within a deserving king.

The conch is comparatively rare on early Indian coins. It appears among symbols surrounding a central lotus on the punch-marked Kadamba Kamalamudrakṣa, and later on the reverse of some bull coins usually ascribed to the early Pallavas. Unfortunately, the condition of these coins and their poor reproduction in photographs does not permit adequate description here.

In southeast Asia, coins with the conch on the obverse and, usually, śrīvatsa on the reverse, are mainly found at Mon sites in Thailand and southern Burma, although a few have been discovered at Oc-Éo, Halin, Śrīkṣetra and in Arakan. The first of these may be Boisellier’s ‘medaille d’argent à la conque’ found at U Thong. Here the apex is depicted by a round dot, under which are three curves of increasing size, forming the upper quarter of the shell. The form bulges around the centre and gradually diminishes to the lower point, from which issues a linear central opening shaped like a question mark. The symbol is contained within a circle, beyond which is a row of dots. The obverse motif of the newly discovered Dvāravati coins appears to have been derived from this type. Also directly connected are the coins found at Nakhon Pathom and Prachin Buri, illustrated by Guehler. Here the conch is more perfectly formed, and is not squashed within the circle as the U Thong motif is. The central opening does not have the ornate curve of the earlier coin, but otherwise the depiction is quite similar.

50 Abul Wahid Khan attempted to allocate these coins to the Visnukundins of the first half of the sixth century, on the basis of a few letters which are not apparent on his photographs; see Andhra Pradesh Arch. Series No.14, pl. XXVI, and pp. 55-7.
51 Arts Asiatique, t. XII (1968), fig. 26.
52 JSS, vol. XXXVII, pt. 2 (1949), pp. 124 ff, and pl. 1, figs. 3, 4, 5. Another unpublished series of slightly concave coins, said to come from Thailand and now at Spinks of London, also have a ‘squashed conch’ on the obverse and the identical ‘Śrī & vārā’ motif on the reverse. I am grateful to Mr. Joe Cribb of the British Museum for showing me photographs of these.
Following the westward drift of Mon culture towards Lower Burma, a coin type very close to the Nakhon Pathom style is found, principally around Pegu. Although the Pegu śrīvatsa differs from the Nakhon Pathom types (the ankhula replacing the vajra), the conch is almost identical. On some specimens two loops issue from the top of the shell, the curved aperture reaches the upper bands and has teeth-like markings. Johnston noted that the specimens of this type which he examined were later in appearance than the early Arakan coins. A date around the ninth or tenth centuries may be appropriate. He was apparently not aware of the Nakhon Pathom coins, which may have influenced the coin types found at Halin, Śrīksetra and Arakan. ‘Pegu’ coins have also been found at Oc-Eo, and among a hoard of later bull and śrīvatsa coins probably from Bangladesh. None have been noticed at Pyu sites. Two coins from Halin described by U Mya are possibly earlier than the Mon conch currency. The reverse has a twelve-spoked wheel within a beaded surround, similar to the sun motif common on Indian coins and seals, but replaced in southeast Asia by the rising sun design. The obverse has a stylized conch, the outline and not the form raised, surrounded by cosmic and royal symbols: sun, moon, seven rivers (?), mountains and a (?) cānāra or dānḍa.

The other Pyu conch type was found among coins in the Khinbagon relic chamber at Śrīksetra, along with images and inscribed plates datable to the sixth or seventh centuries. In these coins, the base of the conch has a twist to the right, and the aperture is missing altogether. It arises from what appears to be a stem, exuding branches which surround the shell. This vegetative surround is also apparent on the earliest coins found in Arakan, some of which also have a lower hook on the conch. In this series, we also find ribbon-like projections from the top of the shell, which suggested to Phayre “the sankh shell of Viṣṇu, with what is apparently meant to represent a hermit crab at the open part: an appropriate Buddhistic symbol”. A similar motif is found at Oc-Eo in various contexts. Although Coomaraswamy regarded the conch on lotus to symbolize the sutra borne by the padma, “the universal ground of existence and birthplace of Life in the Worlds”, on the southeast Asian coins, at least, it would appear to denote the wealth and fertility guaranteed by the issuing king.

The significance of the bhadrāpītha ‘throne’ symbol is immediately obvious to any Burmese. Western readers will be more familiar with Jeannine Auboyer’s work, Le trône et son symbolisme dans l’Inde ancienne (Paris, 1949). Here the author has admirably pointed out the microcosmic symbolism of the throne, and its analogy with Mount Meru and the

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57 U Mya recorded, in this connection, that a legendary history of Mogaung in the Myitkyina District mentioned a seal once in the possession of the Shan Sānwās ruling in that area. The seal is said to have borne the following words on it: “Seven ranges of mountains, seven seas, the sun, the moon and the stars”. It was said to have possessed magical powers and was strictly guarded. As long as it remained in possession of the reigning Sānwā the country was immune from foreign attacks. We are reminded of the representation of the same cosmology, on Buddhaśaṭṭa from Pagan and later Buddhist sites in southeast Asia.
59 Phaye, op.cit., p. 33.
60 E.g., ADM, t. III, pl. LXXXVIII.
61 Elements of Buddhist Iconography (New Delhi, 1972), pp. 77-8.
world pillar, separating the heavens from the underworld. As the symbolism of royalty was adapted for the Buddha, we find a form similar to that on the coin type found on early Buddhapadas, notably from Amaravati.

The rising sun

The rising sun motif is common to the majority of the Pyu coins, and is often found in Thailand, notably at U Thong. The Burmese, Arakanese and Thai chronicles, following Sri Lankan precedent, trace their royal lines from the solar dynasty. The ‘Glass Palace Chronicle’ refers to the title ‘Lord of the Rising Sun’ used by Pyu and Burmese kings. The names of some kings of Angkor, notably Suryavarman and Udayadityavarman, may have some connection with the concept behind the coin motif; Coedes long ago proposed that the Devaraja cult had derived from an ancient Chinese sun-god cult.

Bull

The couchant bull on the obverse of all the Arakanese and Harikela coins after Devacandra has usually been described as a Śālavite symbol. While the early Candras may have favoured this religion, the bull symbol was initially an emblem of royalty and its importance to Indian kingship can be traced to Vedic royal ritual surrounding the sacrificial bull. The bull is among the most common lanchana noticed on royal seals in north and south India, and was used by Śālavite, Vaisnavite and Buddhist kings, often together with other auspicious emblems of royalty: the conch, cāmāra, sun and moon symbols, chattra and arkuśa. The bull motif was often used on Oc-Eo, notably on terracotta sealings and finger rings. In Arakan, a couchant bull within a lotus is depicted on the seal of the sixth-century Candra copper-plate.

Before the time of Devacandra, the bull as a coin device was used almost exclusively by south Indian rulers. The earliest of these may be on the square, silver, punch-marked type found at Konkan. A standing, humped bull, generally facing left, was depicted on the inscribed lead and potin coins of Andhra feudatories of the Satavahanas during the second century A.D. The identical symbol is found on the obverse of the earliest coins definitely attributed to the Pallavas. These are lead coins from the excavations at Kanchi from strata directly above the Sātvāhana phase. The lead coins were succeeded by the early Pallava

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63 In "Le Culte de la royauté divine", Serie Orientale Roma Conferenze (vol. V), pp. 18 ff.
64 E.g. The bull is depicted on the seal of the Guñaijar copper-plate of Vainyagupta (IHQ, VI, p. 46); and on the Rehigaugh seal matrix of Satākā (CII, III, pp. 283-4), and was used by Harşavardhana (Bana, Harṣaracarita, tr. Cowell and Thomas, p. 198, EI, XXI, p. 75, CII, p. 231). It was particularly favoured by the ruling families of Orissa and Andhra, e.g. the Saividhabhas (EI, VI, p. 143, OHRJ, II, p. 6, EI, XXXIX, p. 338, XXI, p. 34, XIX, p. 263), the Bhvaumakaras (EI, XV, p. 1, XXVIII, p. 211, JBORS, XIV, pp. 69, 293, JAHR, XV, IV, p. 189) and the Gaudas of Kalinga (EI, XXIII, p. 62, XVII, p. 307, XIV, p. 360, XXV, p. 194).
65 The vṛṣabhāluṣṭhaṇa was regarded as the insignia par excellence of Pallava sovereignty in an inscription in the Vaiṣṇavāluṣṭhaṇa temple mentioned by G.H. Khare, in Sources of Medieval History of the Deccan (in Marathi), I, p. 21; cited in Prakash, Coinage of South India (Varanasi, 1968), p. 38, and was often used on the seals of copper-plate grants, e.g. EI, VI, p. 84, VIII, p. 159, III, p. 142, South Indian Inscriptions, I, pp. 144 ff., II, pp. 346, 507 ff., 517.
67 R.E.M. Wheeler, op. cit., pp. 288-92, pl. CXXVIII 10-18. These were found together with coins having the southeast Asian śrīvāsa prototype.
68 P.A. A Review, 1962-3, p. 12 and pl. XXXIX B.
 ANCIENT COINAGE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

series in copper and bullion, round coins, sometimes inscribed, with a bull, sun and moon above and a beaded surround on the obverse, and various symbols, including the sun-wheel, conch, fish and a double-masted ship on the reverse. This group is mainly found from the seashore off Mamallapuram, a famous Pallava port, and from Nellore to Pondicherry on the coast. The double-masted ship, a device borrowed from the Satavahanas, indicates the importance of sea trade to the Pallavas.

Phayre mentions a number of lead coins from Tenasserim, one of which has a bull on the obverse and some with a 'galley' on the reverse which, he considered, were based on these south Indian models. The tripartite srivatsa coin from south India described above has a bull on the reverse and possibly belongs to this group. A connected series can be found in the Gurzala hoard from the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. These too have a standing or seated bull within a beaded circle on the obverse. On the reverse is a motif variously described as 'a Śiva lingam, flanked by two curved posts within a rayed circle', or as 'a trident of Śiva'. The symbol could, however, be seen as a development of the 'trisula' type of srivatsa. The Gurzala coins were attributed to the early Viśnukūpīḍha kings of the fifth/sixth centuries by Subramaniam, whereas most other scholars assign them to the fourth/fifth-century Pallavas. In either case, it is clear that these coins, or their immediate prototypes, were the models for the Candra bull/srivatsa coins of Arakan.

It is clear that most of the motifs on southeast Asian coins were introduced from south India, notably the east coast, between the fourth and sixth centuries A.D. It may be that the initial impetus for contact was the Indian search for precious metals after the first century. A result of this was the introduction of coinage where quality and weight were guaranteed by the royal seal in possible imitation of Roman prototypes. However, apart from a few coins of Dharmavijaya of Arakan (flourishing between 665-701) found in Bangladesh, no southeast Asian coins have yet been recorded in India. The diffusion of the motifs throughout the area is clear, but until further statistical data regarding provenance and weights are collected, it is impossible to come to more precise conclusions than those tentatively proposed here. Only then can we establish the extent of economic and political influence of the early urban centres.

Although most of the coin motifs were borrowed from India, they are arranged in a peculiarly southeast Asian manner. The juxtaposition of the srivatsa motif with celestial symbols above and water symbols below is never found in India, but illustrates the concept
of divine kingship as it must have existed by the fifth century. In earlier society, the chief was concerned with assuring social stability and reproduction and soil fertility through the propitiation of the tribe’s common ancestor, who could mediate with the territorial and celestial spirits. The advent of urbanization precipitated the need to guarantee the support of a wider population, no doubt of diverse origin, and the answer was found in the magic power attained through Indian kingship and religion. Perhaps even more than his Indian counterpart, who controlled a more developed and diverse economy, the king had to be seen to regulate the forces of nature in order to assure the fertility and prosperity of the country.

Hence, such texts as the fifth-century *Suvarnabhasottamasutra*, which gained popularity in India and China, may well have been used as models for kingship. Notably, in the chapter on ‘Instruction concerning divine kings,’ we find

The law-abiding king fills the triple world with his fame, and the lords of the gods in the dwellings of the thirty-three will rejoice. In Jambudvipa the law-abiding king is thus our son. He establishes people in good action... asterisms and likewise moon and sun move properly. In due time the winds blow. In due time the god sends rain. The god provides plenty in the realm...

The king, seen as the source of his realm’s prosperity, emphasized this function on the reverse of every coin as a constant reminder to his people. His guarantee of the value of the coin was likewise illustrated by the dynastic insignia on the obverse. Having established coinage as a major medium of exchange, he was able to centralize and thereby dominate the economy of the state.

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74 The old territorial spirits were not forgotten. Do We, in his *Maha Razawin*, recounts that as part of the coronation ritual of the Arakanese kings, 50 coins struck to commemorate the new reign, together with 50 struck in the previous reign, were deposited by the king in the hole dedicated to Vasundhara, the Earth Goddess, within the Mahamuni Temple enclosure (*ASB*, 1920-21, pp. 60-61).

INDEX TO FIGURE 1 APPEARING ON OVERLEAF

Figure 1. Variations on the śrīvatsa motif

No. 1. Śrī from Kharavela's inscription at Udayagiri cave, Orissa (ASB, 1959-60, p. 39)
No. 2. Sūñci (ASB, 1959-60)
Nos. 3, 4. Sātavāhana coins from Ṭhānḍra and Karnataka (Ancient India, 4 [1948], pl. CXXVIII)
No. 5. 'Nīga' symbol (J.N. Banerjée, Development of Hindu Iconography, pl. II, 11)
No. 6. Gupta seal, shield type (ibid., pl. II, 12)
No. 7. Śrīkṣetra, terracotta mould; reverse: bhadrāpiṭha (ASI, 1910-11, pl. XVII, 9-10)
No. 8. Śrīkṣetra, motif on bell (Arch. Neg. 13235 [1966-67])
No. 9. Pallava, the goddess Śrī in the form of a śrīvatsa (Sivarammaurti, Aspects of Indian Culture, p. 52)
No. 10. Beikthano; reverse: rising sun (Aung Thaw, Excavations at Beikthano, pl. LVIIIa)
No. 11. Oc-Ēo No. 950; reverse: rising sun (ADM, III, pl. XLV)
No. 12. U Thong; reverse: rising sun (Arts Asiatiques, t. XII [1965], fig. 27)
No. 13. Vaikālī, motif on plaque (Gutman, Ancient Arakan, pp. 306-7)
No. 14. Oc-Ēo No. 793, motif on silver pendant (ADM, III, pl. VIII)
No. 15. Beikthano; reverse: rising sun (Aung Thaw, op. cit., fig. 84, 3)
No. 16. Arakan, uninscribed coin; reverse: conch (Phayre, 'Coins of Arakan', pl. II, 10)
No. 17. Śrīkṣetra, variant type; reverse: uncertain (Arch. Neg. 2872 [1926-27])
No. 19. Śrīkṣetra; reverse: bhadrāpiṭha (ADM, III, pl. XLVI)
No. 20. U Thong; reverse: conch (Arts Asiatiques, t. XII [1965], fig. 26)
No. 21. Arakan, uninscribed coin; ? Devacandra; reverse: conch (Phayre, pl. II, 10)
No. 22. Arakan, uninscribed coin; ? Devacandra; reverse: conch (ibid.)
No. 23. Arakan, Devacandra; reverse: bull (ibid., 11)
No. 24. Early Pallava ?; reverse: bull (JNSI, vol. XXIX, pt. 1, fig. 1)
No. 26. Prachin Buri; reverse: conch (ibid., fig. 3)
No. 27. Halin; reverse: bhadrāpiṭha (JFRS, vol. LIH, II pl. XIII)
No. 28. Pegu; reverse: conch (Johnston, Some Sanskrit Inscriptions ..., pl. V, 2)
No. 29. Arakan, Dhammacandra; reverse: bull (ibid., 20)
No. 30. Early Pallava ?; reverse: bull (JNSI, vol. XXIX, pt. 1, fig. 1)
Nos. 31, 32. Pagan, śrīvatsas on Buddhapādas (ASB, 1959-60, p. 39)
1. Orissa  
2. Sanci  
3. Andhra  
4. Satavahana  
9. Pallava  
10. Beikthano  
11. Oc Êo  
12. Û Thông  
17. Śrīksetra  
18. Halin  
19. Śrīksetra  
20. Û Thông  
25. Pra Pathom  
26. Prachinburi  
27. Halin  
28. Pegu
5. "Nāga" symbol  
6. Gupta  
7. Śrīkṣeta  
8. Śrīkṣeta  
13. Vesālī  
14. Ŭc Bo  
15. Beikthano  
16. Arakan  
21. Arakan  
22. Arakan  
23. Arakan  
24. Pallava  
29. Arakan  
30. Pallava  
31. Pagan  
32. Pagan
**Variations on the Śankha Motif**

1. Oc-ēo
2. Oc-ēo
3. Śriṅgētra
4. Oc-ēo
5. Oc-ēo
6. Pegu
7. Pegu
8. Arakan
9. Arakan

*Figure 2. Variations on the śankha motif*

Nos. 1, 2. Oc-ēo, nos. 948, 949; reverse: śrīvatsa (*ADM, III, pl. XLIV*)
No. 3. Śrīṅgētra, variant type (*Arch. Neg. 2872 [1926-7]*)
No. 4. Oc-ēo, no. 809, gold pendant (*ADM, III, pl. III*)
No. 5. Oc-ēo, engraved seal (*ibid., pl. LXXXVIII*)
Nos. 6, 7. Pegu, BMC (*Johnston, pl. V, 2, 1*)
Nos. 8, 9. Arakan, BMC; reverse: śrīvatsa (*ibid., 3, 4*)
ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Arch. Neg.</td>
<td>Followed by a serial number of the Photo-Negative as given in U Mya, <em>A List of Archaeological Photo-Negatives of Burma</em> (Delhi, 1935), or in ‘The List of Photographs taken by the Archaeological Survey’ appended to each yearly report of ASB to 1965</td>
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<td><em>Archaeological Survey of India Annual Report</em>, yearly from 1902-3 to 1936-7</td>
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<td>BEFEO</td>
<td><em>Bulletin de l’Ecole Française d’Extrême-Orient</em></td>
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<td>BMC</td>
<td>British Museum Collection</td>
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<td>BSOAS</td>
<td><em>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London</em></td>
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<td>EI</td>
<td><em>Epigraphia Indica</em></td>
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<td><em>Indian Archaeology, A Review</em>; Department of Archaeology, New Delhi, yearly from 1953</td>
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