

**CHAPTER VI**  
**ŚAKA / SCYTHIAN INFLUENCE ON**  
**INDIAN ART (LATER PERIOD)**

## **C H A P T E R VI**

### **ŚAKA/SCYTHIAN IMPACT ON INDIAN ART OF LATER PERIODS**

This chapter deals with the Śaka/Scythian elements in Indian art from about the middle of the first century A.D. onwards. In chapter V above, we have dealt with Śaka/Scythian elements in Indian art in the major areas of Indo-Scythian rule, i.e., the borderlands and in the north-western part of the subcontinent, till the middle of the first century A.D.

The major areas once under the Śaka/Scythian or Śaka-Pahlava rule continued to experience the impact of nomadic art styles. This is evident from the objects unearthed at the sites of Shotorak, Paitāva and Kham Zargar. As we shall see below, these sites have yielded various utility objects, weapons, horse trappings, ornaments and sculptured reliefs betraying Śaka/Scythian and Śaka-Pahlava art elements.

Some minor regions of Śaka/Scythian and Śaka-Pahlava rule, from the first century A.D. onwards, have been discussed in Chapter II. Among the minor areas, mention may be made of modern Kashmir, Haryana, Mathurā, Saurashtra, Rajasthan and the western part of Madhya Pradesh, from where various artifacts dated in the first century A.D. onwards reveal the impact of the Śaka/Scythian and Śaka-Pahlava or Scytho-Parthian art styles. Regions other than the areas ever ruled by the Śaka/Scythians or Śaka-Pahlavas also received the impact of the Śaka/Scythian and Śaka-Pahlava styles in the formation of their art objects, as in Maharashtra, upper Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. Perhaps these areas experienced the diffusion of the Śaka/Scythian and Śaka-Pahlava styles due to their proximity or linkages via trade routes. Another factor could be the expansion of these areas as a result of trade with the Andhra kingdoms,<sup>1</sup> which seems to have strengthened the stylistic factor.

We go back to the three sites of Shotorak, Paitāva and Kham Zargar, located in the heart of the major areas of Śaka/Scythian rule, i.e., between the borderlands of India and the north-western part of the subcontinent, in search of Śaka/Scythian and Śaka-Parthian art elements. The three sites

---

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Civ. Cen. As.*, Vol. II, p.203.

can be broadly located in the Kapiśā region in the eastern part of Afghanistan, to the south of the Hindu Kush mountains and adjacent to ancient Gandhāra. Here, the nomadic cultural evolution was set in motion by the presence of the Śakas, subsequently by the Parthians, and then of course by the Kushāṇas, after the latter crossed the Hindu Kush mountains. Under the Kushāṇa rule, Kapiśā became the first important political centre outside Bactria, and Shotorak lies five kms. east of Kapiśā-Begram. Shotorak's proximity with Kapiśā is important, as Kapiśā already had an established urban centre supported by fertile lands and a good irrigation system, which had been in existence since Achaemenid times. Meunié excavated Shotorak and dated the site from second to third century A.D. on the basis of a coin of Vāsudeva, which had been discovered besides the votive *stūpa* D4.<sup>1</sup> From the remains of a large standing Buddha image and pedestal from Shotorak, we see two images on the left side of the Buddha.<sup>2</sup> These two images are wearing the typical Scythian costume and are similar to the attire of the donors in the relief of the Buddha flanked by Kāśyapas, also from Shotorak (Plate 202).<sup>3</sup> The figures of Trapuśa and

---

<sup>1</sup> Haruko Tsuchiya, 'An Iconographical Study Of The Buddhist Art Of Shotorak, Paitāva And Khan Zargar', *Silk Road Art And Archaeology*, 2000, Vol. 6, p.100.

<sup>2</sup> *Dyn. Art. Kus.* Pl. 99a

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 98a.

Bhallika, flanking the Śākyamuni (Plate 203),<sup>1</sup> at Shotorak are depicted as wearing the Scythian type tunic, baggy trousers, and both are sporting long beards. Similarly, in the relief of the worship of Śākyamuni's alms bowl (Plate 204),<sup>2</sup> from Shotorak, the flanking figures protecting the bowl are wearing the typical Scythian tunics with belts or girdles and close-fitting trousers. Similar costumes are also seen to be depicted on several sculptures of Indo-Scythian devotees (Plate 205) from Takal.<sup>3</sup> A Śaka/Scythian devotee from Jaulian, Taxila, wears a similar belted tunic reaching below the knee, as at Shotorak. In a relief (Plate 206), found from Paitāva<sup>4</sup> comprising an image pedestal with Maitreya flanked by figures, some are wearing belted tunics, upto the knee and their trousers are tucked in boots, while others are wearing tunics below the knee, and baggy trousers. A fragmented relief with Śaka/Scythian devotees and another relief fragment with garlands borne by Śaka/Scythian men have been found from Shotorak. It seems that nomadic art had traversed a long way and was in the service of the spread of Buddhist religion.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 102.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 103.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 62a.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 104.

An interesting gold amulet case (Plate 233)<sup>1</sup> has been found from Ahin Posh, near Jalalabad, Afghanistan. It is dated in the second, third century A.D. The openings on this eight-sided cylinder are backed with garnets, as are those on the two ends, one of which can be opened. The motifs on the gold amulet case have garnet incrustations and they are similar to the Śaka/ Scythian motifs. Such cylindrical amulet cases, designed to be worn on a cord, can be seen on the chests of the bejewelled Bodhisattvas of the Gandhāra period.

Two gold *tatankacakras* or discal ear ornaments (Plate 234) from Gandhāra of circa third century A.D. are preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>2</sup> They depict a goose with floriated feathers, in the typical Scythian 'curved inwards' style. The central motif is encircled by a double border.

We go further east and find at the head of the Doab of the Indus and Jhelum rivers, the great centre of Taxila. We have already seen that Taxila occupied a major meeting point of the trade routes coming from Kabul, from

---

<sup>1</sup> *Gol. Tre. Jew. Ind.*, p.20, Pl.17. cf. also Hugh Tait ( ed. ), *Seven Thousand Years of Jewellery*, British Museum, London, 1986, No. 535.

<sup>2</sup> *Ear. Orn. Anc. Ind.*, p. 37, Fig. I. 45.

Kashmir, and from eastern India. Kashmir was again linked with western Tibet and Tibet was linked with Nepal and Bengal. In the last decades of the first century B.C. there were political changes taking place in the west-Punjab region around Taxila. The Greeks under the leadership of Apollodotus II were subsequently able to regain the territories of the Punjab which they had earlier lost to the Indo-Scythian Maues. However, they were finally expelled from this region around c. 55 B.C. by another Scythian prince, Azes I, who dethroned Hippostratus (the last Greek king to reign in the west Punjab, including Taxila and Pushkalāvati). A *tetradrachm* of Apollodotus II from the Sarai Saleh hoard found on the North-West Frontier, in the Abbotabad region, with two combined monograms, suggests that Apollodotus II was the immediate successor of Maues, and both reigned within a short lapse of time in the same region.<sup>1</sup> Thus, it was Azes I himself who definitively established the Indo-Scythian dynasty in the region of the West Punjab. It is noteworthy, that stylistically, the portrait of the king on the Apollodotus's *drachm* is similar to the one issued in the west-Punjab mints. The hoard found in the Malakand region, not far away from the ancient cities of Pushkalāvati (near Peshawar) and Taxila is similar to the Peshawar hoard containing coins of Azes I, Azilises, Azes II and

---

<sup>1</sup> Osmund Bopearachchi, 'The Arsacid Empire : Sources and Documentation', *Das Partherreich Und Seine Zeugnisse*, Stuttgart, 1998, p.396.

Gondophares.<sup>1</sup> Again, it is to be noted that trade between upper Mesopotamia and North-West India, both overland and by way of Mesene and the Persian Gulf was frequent during the first century A.D.<sup>2</sup>

Taxila and its surrounding sites have yielded utility objects, ornaments, weapons, coins and horse-trappings, dated in the middle of the first century A.D. onwards. Most of them betray the Śaka/Scythian, Śaka-Pahlava or Scytho-Parthian styles. The style of these objects can hardly be distinguished as belonging prior to the first century A.D. or after the first century A.D. The Taxila valley had access to diverse kinds of raw materials from regions as far removed as Mirzapur and Mathurā.

### C. EAST OF THE NORTH - WESTERN PART OF INDIA

The region east of the north-western part of India was noted for the extensive working of iron in the neighbourhood of Sof, east of Achabal. It is noteworthy that the *Periplus* informs us that during the first century A.D.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p.399.

<sup>2</sup> G. Huxley, 'Geography in the Acts of Thomas', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 24, 1983, p.75.

Indian iron used to be exported from Ariaca on the Gulf of Cambay area.<sup>1</sup> Again, a diagnostic feature of Scythian culture was the adoption of iron metallurgy.<sup>2</sup> It may be presumed that the Śaka-Pahlava areas of rule generally followed the geographical directions of the trade routes. With Śaka-Pahlava rule, it may also be assumed that Śaka-Pahlava elements would be present in their art forms. Perhaps, the Śaka-Pahlavas were involved in the iron working, a craft which no doubt conferred a magical prestige on its practitioners, and in the iron trade, as they were ruling over the peripheral areas of Kashmir, during the middle of the first century A.D. The Semathan excavation at Kashmir has yielded various objects expressing the impact of Śaka/Scythian and Śaka-Pahlava styles. These are mainly found from period IV and Period III strata. Period IV of the excavated area has yielded bowls with incurved rims, vases, ink-pot type lids, all dating from the first to the fifth century A.D. If we consider carefully, we find that the inkpot type lids from Kashmir are stylistically similar to the inkpot type lids found from Taxila. Also found from period IV stratum are bowls with footed bases, and some terracotta figures. One terracotta figure has a bearded and moustached head, with chubby cheeks and protruding elongated eyes,

---

<sup>1</sup> W.H.Schoff, *Periplus of The Erythraean Sea*, New York, 1912, p.60.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. Rus. Cen. Asi. Mon.*, Vol I, p. 127.

reminiscent of the Śaka-Pahlava style. This style continued in the Early Kushāna period. Another seated terracotta figure<sup>1</sup> from Kashmir (Period IV of the Semathan excavation) has folded drapery and a scarf covering the back of the head in the typical Central Asian style. The figure has prominent eyes, a long beard and hairdo. It is carrying something in his left hand, and iconographically it recalls the nomadic style. This cross-legged seated figure, bearded and with the Scythian costume is also seen in Śaka-Sarmatian burial complexes, as in the central character of the Kobyakovo torque (Plate 207)<sup>2</sup> dated in the first and second centuries A.D. Tillya-tepe has also yielded a similar cross-legged seated and bearded figure wearing the Scythian costume.<sup>3</sup> It was therefore a common iconographic type practised throughout the region, from Central Asia to the east.

Excavations at Harwan, Kashmir, have revealed a large number of terracotta figures, along the periphery of the *stūpa* remains, and they are dated in the early centuries of the Christian era.<sup>4</sup> The pavement of the courtyard of the Harwan *stūpa* consists of large moulded brick tiles, and the

---

<sup>1</sup> G.S.Gaur, 'Semathan Excavation; A Step Towards Bridging the gap between the Neolithic and the Kushāna Period In Kashmir', *Archaeology and History*, Vol. 1, 1987, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. M.Y.Treister's article cited in Footnote No. 21 in Chapter V, p.80, Fig. 9.

<sup>3</sup> V.Sarianidi, *Khram i Nekropol' Tillya-tepe*, Moscow, 1989, p.66, Fig. 23.

<sup>4</sup> R.C.Kak, *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*, p. 107.

favourite pattern seems to have been a large disc consisting of several concentric circles within a single central unit. Other motifs include wavy lines, fish-bone patterns, flower designs, geese in rows, cocks, rams fighting, deer looking with their heads turned backwards, archers or horsebacks and men in armour hunting deer with bows and arrows. One is reminded of the *āyāgapaṭas* of Mathurā. Thus, the geometrical and animal motifs suggest a probable Śaka/Scythian affiliation, more so as Kashmir was within the Śaka-Pahlava territories. Another factor possibly hints that the tiles were made of Śaka-Scythian, Śaka-Pahlava and Kushāṇa patronage. This assumption is based on the fact that each tile bears a number in Kharoshtī script. The Kharoshtī script flourished principally in the third to fourth centuries A.D. in north-western India. Two scripts of Indian origin i.e., Brāhmī and the Kharoshtī were used in early Central Asia. Kharoshtī seems to have been introduced earlier than Brāhmī. Legends in the Prākṛit language and the Kharoshtī script can be noticed on the coins of a group of rulers (possibly Indo-Parthian or Indo-Scythian origin) struck in or near Khotan in c. first century A.D. or rather in first century B.C. to first century A.D. This ruling dynasty hailing probably from the north-western section of the Indian subcontinent, might have been responsible for the official use of the above language and script in Central Asia. The continuation of the use of Prākṛit

and Kharoshtī in Khotan is suggested by a record found at Endere (no.661) dated in the third to fourth century A.D.<sup>1</sup> It follows therefore that the Harwan tiles belong to a period prior to fourth century A.D. and they represented Indian imagery in a Central Asian nomadic rendering. Not only the designs stamped on the tiles, but also the style of the human figures depicted, show heavy features, prominent cheekbones, slanting eyes, receding foreheads and some were dressed in trousers and caps. The heads are shown in profile with their bodies facing front. Impressions on a rectangle (found on a tile) containing a dragon (*makara*) with foliate tail and crest, and upraised trunk-like snout, similarly, betray elements of nomadic art (Plate 208).<sup>2</sup> This diffusion of nomadic art into the Kashmir area was probably due also from Western Tibet. A lion image cast in leaded copper-zinc-tin alloy<sup>3</sup> has been found from Kashmir and it has been dated by P.Pal in the first century A.D. It is similar in style to the Taxilan representation of lions (found in strata dated in the first century A.D.) in their prominently curved chests, hairy manes and curling tails. Similar representation of lions belonging to the Kushāṇa period were found from Mathurā.<sup>4</sup> The Avatāra

<sup>1</sup> B.N.Mukherjee, *India in Early Central Asia*, New Delhi, 1966, p.11.

<sup>2</sup> R.C.Kak, *op. cit.*, Pls. XX. VIII, Figs. 17, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Catalogue No.; M. 81. 153. 2, Indian Art Special Purposes Fund; The Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

<sup>4</sup> Chandra L. Reedy, *Himalayan Bronzes: Technology, Style And Choices*, 1997, p. 151, Pl. k 32.

Frame from Kashmir<sup>1</sup> now in the Sri Pratap Singh Museum, Srinagar, is extraordinary for the complexity of its design and is a masterpiece of Kashmiri metalwork. At the apex of the arch stands a multi-headed Vishṇu and immediately below him is the figure of Śiva. The remaining figures, each framed by a medallion (which is reminiscent of the individual motif of the crouching stag) formed by the continuously joined lotus tendrils, represent, different heroic as well as placid aspects of Vishṇu. This avatāra frame belongs to the tenth century A.D. and somewhere in the technique, the metal-smith uses animal imagery with their convolutions as found earlier in the nomadic metal style (toreutics). It is significant to note here that if any group of artisans who might have retained Hellenising tendencies among a new barbarian clientele (such as the Śaka and Yüeh-chih,) it would have been the Bactrian metal-smiths who produced articles of luxury in precious metals and dazzling gold jewellery for their new masters. Within this tradition, elements of a *recherché* transmuting oriental Hellenism (including the nomadic elements) persisted up to the Islamic era. History made it certain that it would of course spread to India. We go back to the Avatāra frame, and its metalwork that depict the continuously joined lotus tendrils and the animal imagery, so striking to the eye with all their convolutions. In

---

<sup>1</sup> P.Pal, *Bronzes of Kashmir*, p. 70, Pl. II. abc.

this context, we must mention Tibet, and, its metalwork. Pre-Buddhist Tibet had connections with the various nomadic groups (through China of course), as is apparent from the animal style on various brass plaques from Miang, bronze belt buckles from Tsaparang, bronze amulets with figures of stylized animals from Tholing, similar to objects of sacred significance as found from Luristan<sup>1</sup> bronze objects (Plate 209) from the Lake Manasarovar area, and those from Yarlung. A handle or terminal in the form of a stylized ram's head from Shigatse, also amulets depicting four linked birds (a version of this can be seen in the votive tank found from Taxila), bronze figurines of felines, pendants having bell shapes, all reflect Scytho-Siberian forms. From the ninth century onwards, Tibetan metalwork had definite linkages with Kashmiri metalwork, as attested to by various sculptures. The wavy scrolls and convolutions of the animal imagery of Kashmir are also found in Tibetan works like the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara image<sup>2</sup> and in another bronze image of Avalokiteśvara dated in the eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D.<sup>3</sup> It therefore seems that Kashmir, Tibet and Nepal were entangled in the Śaka/Scythia and Scytho-Siberian network of art forms.

---

<sup>1</sup> Giuseppe Tucci, *TransHimalaya*, Archaeologia Mundi, Geneva, 1973, Pl. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 151.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 154.

Jewelleries from Kashmir and Ladakh, and the surrounding regions reflect Scytho-Siberian-Śaka tradition. Gold is still highly valued because of its inalterability and its adaptability to all sorts of uses. As we all know, it is the only metal found in an usable form in its natural state. In Kashmir, the rural women till now have intricately worked silver necklaces with embossed almond-shaped and round pendants fixed to it at intervals.<sup>1</sup> This type of Kashmiri silver necklace attests to the continuation and innovations of techniques and forms of the Śaka-Scythian-Sarmatian tradition. Gulubands<sup>2</sup> (as are commonly known) are necklaces from Ladakh. They consist of silver ornaments set with turquoises strung together with two rows of coral beads and silver pendants on two threads. They have a striking compositional similarity with Śaka/Scythian jewellery, like the necklace (Plate 212) from Tillya-tepe.<sup>3</sup>

Not only in Kashmiri metal-work and jewellery, but also in carpet making in Kashmir, we are grateful to the Śaka/Scythians for their influence. Carpets made in the knot-system in Kashmir seem to continue the Śaka/Scythian and Scytho-Siberian techniques of rug making. This is

---

<sup>1</sup> *Fol. Tri. Des. Ind.*, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Ind. Jew.*, Pl. XLIII, No. 6

<sup>3</sup> *Bac. Gol.*, Pl. 64.

evident from the similarity of Kashmiri rugs with the ancient rugs of the Pazyryk burials. Horses buried at Pazyryk had plaited tails, sometimes knotted at half length instead. Carpets found at Pazyryk and later in Kashmir have often used plaited ends, and this style is still in use not only in Kashmir, but also in Tibet and Nepal. The excavation of tombs at Pazyryk in Siberia and at Noin-ula in Mongolia has shown that both leather and felt were in use in the fourth century B.C. for the manufacture of everyday items such as carpets and saddle covers, as well as magnificent hangings commissioned by the elite. Leather appliqué-work was also popular. Leather has a naturally integrated structure so it can be cut without fear of fraying. This makes it ideal for use in appliqué and especially for the making of hard-wearing clothes and covers. Animal and baggage covers in the same technique are widely used in Northern India and Pakistan.<sup>1</sup>

Bronzes in Nepal, also reflect the Śaka/Scythian and Śaka-Pahlava styles. In the image of the Nāksal Sūrya, dated about 1159 A.D., we find Sūrya dressed in the nomadic costume<sup>2</sup> and the local people refer to the image as 'Śāka Sūrya'. The image wears a double-breasted jacket open at the

---

<sup>1</sup> John Gillow, Bryan Sentance, *A Visual Guide to Traditional Techniques. World Textile*, London, 1999, p. 156.

<sup>2</sup> P. Pal, *The Arts of Nepal*, Vol. 1, p. 142, Fig. 34.

neck and high boots. Round metal plaques, called *mañḍa* in Newari, are inset in the ground next to Buddhist *stūpas* in Nepal (one is reminded of the tiled courtyard adjacent to the Harwan *Stūpa*), and they are revered, even to this day. These *mañḍas* are very much similar to the Indian *āyāgapāṭas*.

Ritual vessels from Chamba, having animal-headed handles, and another having a ribbed surface are presently in the collection of the Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba. The ritual vessels are similar to the Scythian utility objects. These are still used in Chamba. Water pots from contemporary Kinnaur, are noteworthy for their shapes and the spouts, which are in the form of fishes,<sup>1</sup> betray nomadic designs. The stylized vegetal scroll seems to have been taken directly from a Scythian relief panel. The iconography of Ganeśa images in Himachal Pradesh, during the pre-Pratihāra and Pratihāra period (tenth century A.D.) has some interesting features. The long receptacle of the *modak*, the conical crown and the garland of bells, remind us of the nomadic influence which had been truly embedded in the folk elements. These features were automatically incorporated in the Pratihāra art style.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Subhasini Aryan, *Crafts of Himachal Pradesh*, 1993, pp.88, 24.

<sup>2</sup> Arun Kumar Singh, 'Ganeśa Images In Himachal Pradesh. An Iconographical Study', *Purātattva*, 33, Nov.-Dec., 2003, New Delhi, pp.150, 151.

Earrings from Chamba region, locally known as Charka Bunda Bali<sup>1</sup> are similar to the Śaka/ Scythian earrings in their technique and form. Significantly, the lower portion of a silver earring (locally known as Dhedu Jhumka)<sup>2</sup> worn by women of Chamba is similar to the Śaka/Scythian tradition. From the region of Simla Hills, Himachal Pradesh, various ornaments (used daily) reflect the nomadic tradition. Tiny floral rosettes,<sup>3</sup> decorating head jewels, reveal the continuation of earlier traditions. A lovely necklace from the Simla hills, shows trellises of diamond-shaped pieces, barrel-shaped beads and triangles.<sup>4</sup> This popular ornament reveals nomadic influence. The trefoil pattern, so common in the Śaka/ Scythian style revisits in the modern nose rings<sup>5</sup> from Himachal. They are an integral part of the whole composition. Silver earrings from Himachal Pradesh with numerous small silver balls hanging from a crescent<sup>6</sup> reflect the Scytho-Siberian form. The famous Vaikuṇṭhanātha<sup>7</sup> deity of Himachal Pradesh is wearing the

---

<sup>1</sup> *Ind. Jew.*, Pl. XII, No. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Rustam J. Mehta, *Handicrafts and Industrial Arts of India*, Bombay, 1960, Pl. XI, No. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Fol. Tri. Des. Ind.*, Pl. 59.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 59.

<sup>5</sup> *Ear. Orn. Anc. Ind.*, p.318, Fig. A 12.51

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 315, Fig. A 12.42.

<sup>7</sup> M. Postel, A. Neven, K. Mankodi, *Antiquities of Himachal*, 1985, p.99.

lozenge type of earrings probably because of Kashmiri influence.<sup>1</sup> Actually, the root lies in the nomadic tradition, as we may humbly point out.

Archaeological excavations in the district of Sonapat in Haryana have revealed the emergence and continuous evolution of settlements from the early Harappan to the early historical period of the Kushāṇas.<sup>2</sup> The occurrence of a large hoard of 1200 *hemidrachms* of Graeco-Bactrians and about 10000 coins of the Yaudheyas, Kushāṇas and later Kushāṇas speak of its significance in the early historical and historical periods. The Harsana Kalan site dated in the first century A.D. yielded bevelled rims of bowls and the shard of a lid with a conical central knob.<sup>3</sup> Similar utility objects have been unearthed from the Śaka/Scythian stratum at Taxila. The nomadic ornamental tradition of Taxila had certainly spread to the adjoining Punjab. Throughout the medieval age and till the modern period, several nomadic tradition persists in the Punjab area. This is noticeable in the Punjabi jewellery comprising earrings, bracelets and head ornaments.<sup>4</sup> Enamelled gold necklaces (called Champā-kali) from Amritsar also attest to the

---

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 82 – 86.

<sup>2</sup> R.C.Thakran, *Dynamics of Settlement Archaeology*, New Delhi, 2000, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281.

<sup>4</sup> *Ind. Jew.*, Pl. XXXIX.

continuation of the nomadic tradition. These necklaces are set with gems and strung on red silk covered with gold wires.<sup>1</sup>

A hoard of Jaina bronzes from Hansi in the Hisar District was excavated in February 1982, and the presence of such bronzes attests to the prevalence of Jainism in Haryana during the eighth to tenth centuries A.D.<sup>2</sup> Images of Mahāvidyā Achchhuptā have been found. She is wearing full boots and riding a horse bedecked with saddle and trappings. She is seen holding a sword and arrow in the normal and extra right hands and a bow and shield in the corresponding left hands. The entire image of Mahāvidyā, consisting of individual elements like boots, being astride a horse, the trappings, sword and arrow, conjures a nomadic imagery.<sup>3</sup> In an ancient mound in Kangra fort, there is an apparently ruined temple with remains of a decorated stone block having two reasonably stylized animal riders.<sup>4</sup> We cannot definitely ascertain Śaka/Scythian influence at work, but coins found at Kangra are similar to the Indo-Parthian ones with the obverse having horseman and Śrī and the reverse showing recumbent bulls.<sup>5</sup> The Nurpur Temple at Kangra has peculiar ornamentation consisting of projected figures

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. XVI, No. 1.

<sup>2</sup> D.Handa, *Jaina Brozes from Hansi*, Simla, New Delhi, 2002, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Pls. 44a, 43a, b.

<sup>4</sup> Dilip.K.Chakrabarti, S.J.Hasan, *Antiquities of Kangra*, New Delhi, 1982, pp. 28-29.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

of grotesque animals and geometrical motifs,<sup>1</sup> including the comma motifs and the stylized antlers or S-shaped motifs. The motifs make one think, in terms of an impact of Śaka/ Scythian art. The Śaka/Scythian motifs are not new in the architectural décor of India. The individual components of Kirttimukha, where both human and animal motifs are fused together, have been frequently used in Hindu temples.<sup>2</sup> These are similar in style to the horned Kirttimukha as found from Sirkap, Taxila. A head of a Śiva image from Mathurā dated in the third-fourth century A.D. has a Kirttimukha as a headdress. A similar one is depicted on the headdress of Śiva of the Daśāvatāra cave, Ellora. The Śaka/Scythian influence can also be traced in the *āmalaka* of the temple. Its solid shape is that of a ring stone. The naturally perforated ring stone is the prototype of the many carved stone discs found in various sites of Taxila<sup>3</sup>, Śankisa, Kosam and Patna. Kirttimukhas have been abundantly used in Khajuraho temples, and in other temples of Northern Gujarat and Rajasthan even in the eleventh century A.D.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, New Delhi, 1976, Vol. II, p. 323.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 323.

Excavations at Ahichchhatra show continuous levels of occupation from Stratum VIII, dated in the 300 – 200 B.C. to Stratum IV, dated in the 100 – 350 A.D. Pottery shards from Stratum IV show certain motifs, which could be equated with the Śaka/Scythian motifs. These motifs include twin fishes, rosettes, *nandipadas* (which were also found from Taxila) and snakes flanking a central pillar.<sup>1</sup> Votive tanks found at Ahichchhatra<sup>2</sup> are similar to the votive tanks from Taxila. According to some scholars, these votive tanks could be of indigenous origin.

Kauśāmbī was an important urban centre during the first centuries of the Christian era. Terracotta figures (Plate 210),<sup>3</sup> from Śaka-Parthian levels have the typical conical caps. Also goblets with flat and footed bases were found. A terracotta drummer (Plate 211) with a peaked cap<sup>4</sup>, definitely displays Śaka/Scythian influence. Other terracotta figures, with their dresses and decorations, somehow reflect the Śaka-Pahlava style of Seleucia and Dura. Stratigraphically, they all belong to the first and second centuries

<sup>1</sup> A. Ghosh, K.C.Panigrahi, 'Pottery Of Ahichchhatra', *Ancient India*, 1946, No. 1, p.46.

<sup>2</sup> V.S.Agrawala, 'Terracotta figurines Of Ahichchhatra', *Ancient India*, No. 4. 1947-48, pp. 125-126.

<sup>3</sup> G.R.Sharma, 'Excavations at Kausambi, 1949-50', *Memoirs of The Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 74, Fig. 34.

<sup>4</sup> G.R.Sharma, 'Excavations at Kausambi, 1957-59', Pl. XXXB.

A.D., a period when the Śaka-Pahlavas, through trade and conquests, had penetrated not only in north-west India but also in the plains of northern India. Many names of Śaka origin have been found in the inscriptions excavated in the Ghoshitarāma area of Kausāmbī. Votive tanks of Kausāmbī were similar to those found from Taxila and Ahichchhatra. In the votive tanks of Kausāmbī were found seated figures, usually drummers, dressed in trousers and belted tunics reaching upto the knees, thereby revealing the nomadic attire. Excavations at Narhan<sup>1</sup>, near Gorakhpur, have revealed similar votive tanks with lamps and birds on the rim of the tanks, and musicians squatting against the walls of the tanks.

From first century A.D. onwards, Mathurā and its surrounding regions have yielded various artifacts, clearly betraying the continuation of the nomadic style. Two fragments from Mathurā, of the Śaka and Kushāṇa period, and now in the Patna Museum, show remnants of the silver and gold with which they were coated, or else the gold was employed in the polychromy of the plaque.<sup>2</sup> Another artifact<sup>3</sup> from Bulandibagh show definite recrudescence due to the Scythian origin.

---

<sup>1</sup> P. Singh, *Excavations at Narhan 1984-89*, 1994, p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> Barbara Stoler Miller, *Exploring India's Sacred Art*, New Delhi, 1994, p. 78.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83, Pl. 3-2. II.

Excavations at Sonkh have proved rewarding for the Śaka/ Scythian factor. The levels 23 and 24 contained structural remains and instructive finds of the Kshatrapa period of Mathurā. They represent a culture which is a mixture of indigenous (India) and foreign (Śaka) elements, best shown by the appearance of Kshatrapa coins along with those of Rāmadatta of the Datta dynasty of Mathurā.<sup>1</sup> A round plaque depicting on the obverse a ferocious lion standing over its prey is found from Sonkh.<sup>2</sup> The lion stretches across the whole width of the plaque with the head turned backwards. Under its legs are two crouching wild boars, and on the lower edge, an iguana is depicted.

An interesting sculpture of Baladeva<sup>3</sup> (now in a Private Collection, Switzerland) is curved on both sides. Dated in the 100-300 A.D., it is made of mottled red sandstone, characteristic of the Mathurā region of U.P. It depicts a splendid figure of *makara* (in a stylistic manner) on one side, and a regally attired seated figure on the other. Two Śvetambara monks are depicted against the lotus seat, and a third figure, dressed in a tunic and

---

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Härtel, *Excavations at Sonkh*, Berlin, 1993, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140, Pl. 148.

<sup>3</sup> Pratapaditya Pal, *The Peaceful Liberators : Jain Art from India*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1994, p. 169.

trousers in the Scythian mode, is shown in front of the club. He could be a Scythian or Kushāṇa convert, donor, or a native who had adopted the foreign attire.

Early Gupta gold and silver coinage had evolved from Hellenistic and Śaka-Kushāṇa coinage, not only in design but also in treatment and execution. In some of the imperial coins up to Skandagupta, the costume of the kings and its treatment retain Scytho-Kushāṇa characteristics.<sup>1</sup>

The large number of pottery spouts assignable to the Gupta period and found from Ahichchhatra, Rājghāt, Śākambharī and other sites are indeed remarkable. They are mostly designed in the form of animal heads such as boars, elephant, lions, *makaras* etc. There can be no doubt that such utilitarian devices, like, spouts and lug-handles or lug-ears of cooking and drinking vessels, etc., had evolved from earlier models, with modifications.<sup>2</sup> The Śaka-Scythian tradition of using animal heads as motifs on utilitarian objects, must have had an indirect influence on later Indian models.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Cul. Ind. Peo., Clas. Ag.*, p. 559.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 557.

A stone disc (Plate 216) from Rājghāt is presently in a private collection at Varanasi. This example<sup>1</sup> was carved from chocolate soapstone having a prominent grey streak running across the centre. The carved obverse is in an excellent state of preservation while on the reverse may be noted a deep groove and a roughly incised check pattern. A circular protuberance at the centre forms the core of a full-blown lotus having 23 petals. Around the lotus in a clock-wise direction moves a file of nine quadrupeds comprising a lion, three hares, a mole, a ram, a dog, one goat and an antelope. The zone remains redefined by a double band of cable-moulding. Beyond this richly carved central depression there may be found three concentric bands of 'notch like design' or 'beaded bands' on the sloping edge. This particular stone disc clearly betrays Achaemenid and nomadic styles.

A general structural sameness marks both the ring-stones and stone-discs, yet discovered sporadically from distant early historical sites of northern India namely Taxila, Ropar, Mathurā, Sañkisā and Kosam, Rājghāt, Patna, Murtaziganj, Ujjain, and Vaiśali. These were characterized by jewel-like workmanship and exquisite finish. These specimens of early Indian lithic

---

<sup>1</sup> Anjan Chakravarty, 'A Mauryan Stone-Disc from Rājghāt', *Kalā*, Vol. VIII, New Delhi, 2003, p. 137.

art were crafted from various materials like alabaster, soapstone, sandstone, steatite and diorite.

We have found terracotta models of foreigners wearing the typical Scythian attire (with their distinctive facial type) from Harwan, Rājghāt, Kosam, Bhita and other sites including those of the Punjab and the North-West India.<sup>1</sup> A particular back-rest of a Nālandā Buddha image introduces some novelty in the usual decorative scheme of the art of Nālandā.<sup>2</sup> It belongs to the fifth century A.D. Instead of the customary leogryph of the classical Gupta steles, we find in our sculpture that the vertical space between the *makara*-headed crossbar and the rectangular seat is filled by a queer animal. From a perusal of the royal seat painted in Cave I at Ajantā,<sup>3</sup> the creature seems to be a deer or even a goat. The habit of filling up an available space (with an animal motif) is somehow reminiscent of the Śaka/Scythian influence. The use of buckled girdle, as found on an image of Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi, from Nālandā may have been a popular style which continued from the Śaka-Parthian period to the Gupta period.<sup>4</sup> Other than

---

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Cul. Ind. Peo., Clas. Ag.*, p.555.

<sup>2</sup> Debjani Paul, *The Art of Nālandā*, Enschede, 1987, Pl. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Madanjeet Singh, *Ajanta : Painting of The Sacred and The Secular*, New York, 1965, p. 43, Pl. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Debjani Paul, *op. cit.*, Pl. 7.

the buckled girdle, another utility object, the ringtopped mendicant's staff (*khakkhara*) held by monks as found in the stucco reliefs of Nālandā is reminiscent of the Scythian pole-top.<sup>1</sup>

#### D. OTHER AREAS OF INFLUENCE OF THE ŚAKA – PAHLAVA ART.

Not only through trade routes, but the areas of Śaka/Scythian and Śaka-Pahlava influence were also connected through the spread of Buddhism. Inscriptions from Nagarjunākonda mention a lady named Cāmtisiri as a major donatrix, requesting for *nirvāṇa* in return for charitable acts. This was a Mahāyāna practice also known from some early inscriptions from Taxila. A composite animal<sup>2</sup> from a Nagarjunākonda frieze reveals Śaka/Scythian influence as also the well-known Scythian type guardian figure on a pillar<sup>3</sup> from Nagarjunākonda.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Rosen Stone, *The Buddhist Art of Nagarjunakonda*, New Delhi, 1994, p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Fig. 232.

Not only at Nagarjunākonda but the terracotta art of Chandraketugarh also reflects Śaka/Scythian influences in some of its forms and motifs.<sup>1</sup>

The Western Kshatrapas of Śaka-Pahlava descent ruled Gujrat for some time during the first to fourth centuries A.D. Present Gujrat is not only geographically a compact unit but the settlements and material culture are also distinct from other areas of India.<sup>2</sup> Some modern day handicrafts of this area show traces of the nomadic influence. The nomadic style had left its influence on the folk idiom. Kutch is noted for its fine gold craft. Kutch workshops still fabricate ornaments using the ancient methods of granulation (also practised by the Scythians) and encrustation. A pair of gold hanging earrings (Plate 228)<sup>3</sup> from Kutch of rather large dimensions, continues the nomadic form of crescents decorated with gold globules and wire. The horned-plquette design revisits Gujrati earrings. The Gujrati specimen closes on hinges<sup>4</sup>, but when the hinge is opened, the entire earring spreads in the form of the typical Scythian horned-plaquette. A striking pair

---

<sup>1</sup> E.Haque, *Chandraketugarh*, Studies in Bengal Art Series, No. 4, Dhaka, 2001, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> A.G.Irani, 'Archaeology of the Settlement of the Kshatrapa Period', *Purātattva*, 1997-98, No. 28, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> *Ear. Orn. Anc. Ind.*, p. 317, Fig. A 12.57.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 310, Fig. A 12.33, the 2<sup>nd</sup> example.

of silver discal earrings (Plate 229)<sup>1</sup> from Gujarat depicts four birds around the central disc and is reminiscent of the animal style. The intricate jewellery of the various semi-nomadic herders like the Kanbe farming caste and also the Muslim herders called the Barri Kutch made use of the above techniques. They still wear the hansli torque made of coiled spring like wire. Also similar to the Śaka/Scythian jewellery are the silver 'tiger' anklets (Plate 213) worn by the Bharhard herder women of Saurashtra,<sup>2</sup> either made locally or in Mumbai.

Ornaments of Rajasthan and Maharashtra<sup>3</sup> show the partial continuation of Śaka/Scythian jewellery forms and techniques. These include spiked silver bracelets from Rajasthan and armlets of silver and dyed cotton threads, known as *bājubandh* which are still worn by the women of the Meena and Jat communities of Rajasthan. Boat-shaped earrings transformed into traditional Jaipuri and Punjabi 'Makris', are still a popular type of ear ornaments. Lunate,<sup>4</sup> crescent and boat-shaped earrings are still in use in Rajasthan and they all reflect the ancient nomadic forms. Hanging

---

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 307, Fig. A 12.24, the 2<sup>nd</sup> example.

<sup>2</sup> Day Cooper, John Gillow, *Arts and Crafts of India*, Thames and Hudson, 2001, p. 84, PL 64.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84, Pls. 65-68.

<sup>4</sup> *Ear. Orn. Anc. Ind.*, p. 311, Fig. A 12.35.

gold earrings<sup>1</sup> are still in use in Barmer, Jaisalmer. In modern Rajasthani jewellery, several items continue the nomadic tradition. Stylised elephants and mythical animals are still depicted on Rajasthani bracelets. Geometrical motifs, such as triangles, dotted lines, dots and circular bands continue to decorate bangles and head jewellery from Rajasthan.<sup>2</sup> Rajasthani pendants enameled with stylised birds<sup>3</sup> and necklets with flower, almond, leaf, and lemon-shaped designs<sup>4</sup> reveal the Śaka/Scythian influence. Individual units of motifs<sup>5</sup> of the Jaipur enamelled jewellery again are reminiscent of the nomadic style. Gold enamelled phalas<sup>6</sup> or ornaments worn on the side of the head, from Jaipur show the Śaka/Scythian influence. A head of Śiva from Kalyanpur, Udaypur District, Rajasthan, preserved in the Pratap Museum, Udaypur, has an interesting ear ornament. The sculpture is of black schist and belongs to the sixth century A.D. On the right ear the obverse face of the earring depicts a young woman, probably a princess with attendant figures. One of them include a dwarfish man with a bent staff and peaked cap<sup>7</sup> recalling the nomadic cap. Necklaces (Plate 214) of linked silver chains, with

---

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 316, Fig. A 12.46.

<sup>2</sup> *Fol. Tri. Des. Ind.*, Pl.54.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 55.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 58.

<sup>5</sup> *Ind. Jew.*, p. 92, Fig. 1; p.98, Figs. 1-13.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101, Figs. 1-5.

<sup>7</sup> *Ear. Orn. Anc. Ind.*, p. 118, Fig. V.49; p.119, Figs. V.50, V.51.

bells from Maharashtra,<sup>1</sup> and bracelets (Plate 215) of linked silver repoussé work from South India<sup>2</sup> all reflect Śaka/Scythian elements as found from both the western and eastern sections of the Scythian art. Specimens of soapstone rosettes with a beaded margin found in Prabhas Patan (Somnath, Junagadh District, Gujarat) were actually covered with gold foil reminiscent of the Tillya-tepe gold rosette plaques.<sup>3</sup> Gold plated earrings from Prabhas Patan Period III and a pulley-shaped jasper ear-stud having a gold plate with a repoussé pattern<sup>4</sup> are reminiscent of the Śaka/Scythian technology. During the Śuṅga-Sātavāhana period of ancient Indian history, the variety and amount of jewellery found on deities was at its peak.<sup>5</sup> A few Sātavāhana jewellery moulds from Ter<sup>6</sup> are stylistically similar to those found at Taxila.<sup>7</sup> In the early eighties of the last century some beautiful oval-shaped terracotta earrings were found at Ter ( Osmanabad District ). They are now kept at the State Museum, Ter. A round pendant (probably part of an earring ) in beige-terracotta shows a herd of elephants in different postures around a big

---

<sup>1</sup> Ilay Cooper, John Gillow, *op.cit.*, p. 84, Pl.67.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84, Pl. 68.

<sup>3</sup> M.K.Dhavalikar, *Sātavāhana Art*, New Delhi, 2004, p. 103.

<sup>4</sup> *Indian Archaeology*, 1956-57, p.17, PLXVIII.A.

<sup>5</sup> *Ear. Orn. Anc. Ind.*, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> M.K.Dhavalikar, *op. cit.*, Pl. LIX, LX.

<sup>7</sup> *Taxila*, Vol. II, p.507.

tusker ( facing the viewer ). The style of the pendant (Plate 232)<sup>1</sup> is reminiscent of the animal style. The elephants have been shown in a vivid manner in all sorts of positions in two concentric rows around the tusker. Small terracotta plaques having a similar subject (i.e. elephants at Ter) have been found at Ahichchhatra from the Sātavāhana period.<sup>2</sup> Two crescent type earrings (Plate 231)<sup>3</sup> from Ter attest to the nomadic influence. Cubic stone moulds<sup>4</sup> from Ter show the carving 'en creux', into which crescent earrings were made either of thin repoussé metal, or perhaps terracotta. The moulds (Plate 230) are presently in the Ter Museum.

Terracotta conical earrings<sup>5</sup> are found from the site at Bhokardan, Maharashtra. They belong to the post-Sātavāhana period. Whether these conical earrings can be associated with the nomadic conical caps is a matter of conjecture. G. B. Deglurkar classifies some of the hollow cones<sup>6</sup> (similar to the conical earrings) without a hole as gamesmen. He reports that seven gamesmen were excavated in Period IA (second to third century B.C.), 24 in IB (first century B.C. to second/third century A.D.), and 12 in Period II

<sup>1</sup> *Ear. Orn. Anc. Ind.*, p. 18, Fig. I.19.

<sup>2</sup> V.S.Agrawala, *op.cit.*, p.162.

<sup>3</sup> *Ear. Orn. Anc. Ind.*, p. 27, Fig. I.30.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.27, Fig. I.28.

<sup>5</sup> G.B.Deglurkar, *Excavations at Bhokardan*, 1973, Fig. 30, Nos. 45-52.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161, Fig. 32, Nos. 1-18.

(post-Sātavāhana till the third century A.D. onwards) while all the other earrings (cones with holes) were excavated during Period II. Reel or amphora type terracotta earrings could be a development from the conical shaped earrings. The former type of earrings can be still seen in Himachal Pradesh. Interestingly, crescent-shaped terracotta earrings were found from Bhokardan (Aurangabad District), recording the largest findings.<sup>1</sup> They belong to the Sātavāhana period and perhaps Bhokardan was a manufacturing site.

During the early centuries of the Christian era, the coastal region of Western India became the focus of two major political powers, the Sātavāhanas and the Śaka-Kshatrapas of Western India<sup>2</sup>. One of the dynasties of the Śaka-Kshatrapas of Western India, known by their coins and inscriptions displaced the Sātavāhana for some time between the first and second centuries A.D. These Śakas are known as the Ksaharātas. At Sambhar a plaque depicting a mythological scene and a Kīrttimukha made in gold leaf was found.<sup>3</sup> Brahmapuri hoards have yielded the largest number of copper and bronze objects revealing a highly advanced technique of metal

---

<sup>1</sup> S.B.Deo, R.S.Gupte, *Excavations at Bhokardan*, 1974, Pl. XLIII.

<sup>2</sup> C.Margabandhu, *Archaeology of the Sātavāhana Kshatrapa Times*, Delhi, 1985, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.77.

work.<sup>1</sup> Among the objects, a wine jug with a trefoil rim and a lion face handle has been found. The disc on which the lion's paw rests has traces of silver inlay in the pattern of tendrils surrounding the paw. It was originally soldered to the jug. A small vessel and its cover at Brahmapuri<sup>2</sup> has been engraved with the motif of galloping horse, panther and a bear, a lion, a winged mythical creature with eagle's beak, aquatic birds like geese and strange fish-shaped motifs. A repoussé plaque of a mythical lion with beaked eagle's head (perhaps a decorative piece) was also found from the Brahmapuri hoard. Spouted pots with and without handles and having animal-shaped spouts were found from Sisupalgarh, Paunar and Maheshwar dated in the second century A.D.<sup>3</sup> Spouts in the form of bird's beaks were also found. Devnimori and Rangmahal have also yielded similar utility vessels. May be they were of specialized use on certain occasions.<sup>4</sup>

Decorative timberwork of Punjab and Kangra manufactured in the form of doors, door-surrounds, carved beams reflect nomadic traits. The brackets (Plate 217) supporting the projecting balconies have intricately

---

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p.78.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Khandalawala, *Lalit Kalā*, 7, 1960, Pl.XIX, F26-31, Pl.XX, 32.4.

<sup>3</sup> C.Margabandhu, *op.cit.*, pp. 126-127.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.127.

interwoven struggling animal forms.<sup>1</sup> They belong to the medieval period or just earlier. These wooden brackets betray the nomadic influence. In Rajasthan, in the Shekhawati region and in some parts of Gujrat, wooden brackets (similar to the wooden reliefs of Pazyryk and Kuturguntas) are still used as architectural elements, and are strikingly similar to those found from Tibet (fragments of wooden doorways dated in the eleventh to twelfth centuries A.D.) Carved wooden pillars<sup>2</sup> from Gujrat with floral, animal and curving tendril designs somehow enmeshes the nomadic style. Also wooden architectural elements (Plate 218) carved in the form of a horse and a lion (especially the lion in a square niche,<sup>3</sup> with curled tails) from Saurashtra, Gujrat, reflect the nomadic style.

A bidri-ware (bowl with a silver inlay) made in Bidar in the nineteenth century shows the design of concentric circles with swarming fishes around a central floral disc.<sup>4</sup> It is reminiscent of the bowl designs from Scythia. The manufacture of bidri-ware in Bidar was a local tradition during the 15<sup>th</sup> century; it is known that local rulers summoned metal workers from Persia (from where some nomadic elements or strains communicated). Incidentally,

---

<sup>1</sup> Ilay Cooper, John Gillow, *op.cit.*, p.32.

<sup>2</sup> *Fol. Tri. Des. Ind.*, Pl 68.

<sup>3</sup> Ilay Cooper, John Gillow, *op.cit.*, p. 53, Pls. 40, 41.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

in Hyderabad, there is a Irāni *gali* (lane of the Irānis), where workers beat the basic shape out of brass sheets and then decorate them with repoussé designs.

Ornaments manufactured at Mumbai (earlier known as Bombay) and Kolkata (earlier known as Calcutta) also depict the ancient nomadic motifs and techniques. Bonding minute spheres of gold to a gold surface or simply granulation is still a favourite technique of the gold-smiths. On the other hand, repoussé (from the French “thrust back”) in relief on thin metal beaten up from the reverse side, is another favourite. Necklaces made in Kolkata and Mumbai, still contain motifs which have been earlier encountered at Taxila (Plate 219)<sup>1</sup> and elsewhere in the nomadic world. This is apparent in the manufacture of gold necklaces (*jalli*) at Mumbai. The latter is characterized by square gold plaques, chased and ornamented with fine granulated work and united to the other by gold links and open-work pendants at the bottom.<sup>2</sup> Nomadic style is also apparent in the silver anklets and bracelets of open work design (and a ring of ball ornaments round the perimeter), from Mumbai.<sup>3</sup> Ornaments manufactured at Kolkata continue to

---

<sup>1</sup> *Taxila*, Vol. III, Pl. 193, nos. 56, 57, 58.

<sup>2</sup> *Ind. Jew.*, Pl. XXIV, No.2.

<sup>3</sup> Rustam J.Mehta, *op. cit.*, Pl. XI, No.3.

reflect the nomadic tradition and style. Nepali Har,<sup>1</sup> a type of necklace, consists of interlinked gold beads of various shapes (Plate 220) recalling Śaka/Scythian types. Gold bracelets with *makara* head terminals (Plate 221)<sup>2</sup> obviously attest to the nomadic style. Small gold plaques (Plate 222) of various shapes<sup>3</sup> are used by the gold-smiths of Kolkata for the manufacture of small ornaments and parts of ornaments. Most of these motifs have been found in both the western and eastern sections of the Śaka/Scythian art. A type of bracelet (known as *chur* in Kolkata) has the trefoil<sup>4</sup> pattern framed (Plate 223 A) in a row. Various arm ornaments from Kolkata continue reflecting (Plate 223B) the popular nomadic motifs. The trefoil plaques have been extensively found at Tillya-tepe. A jeweller's mould<sup>5</sup> of cast brass (Plate 224) is an interesting specimen depicting various motifs which have been deeply incised. It belongs to the twentieth century India. When a gold-smith needs to produce endless identical repetitions of small motifs, he may use a mould, hammering sheet gold or silver into a preformed depression on the metal block. This mould is probably as attractive as the jewellery it produced.

---

<sup>1</sup> *J.K.Das and Co. No.34*, Calcutta, Cat.No.207.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Cat.No. 308.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Cat.No. 365.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Cat.No. 328.

<sup>5</sup> *Gol. Tre. Jew. Ind.*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1988, Pl.125.

On careful consideration the Śaka/Scythian motifs are thus found to have been embedded in Indian culture. Even the popular apparel of *salwar-kāmeez* (this type of costume is popular throughout India and amongst Indians living abroad), with its tunic and baggy pant, reflect the nomadic attire. As seen, jewellery, of various forms and style continue to reflect the usages of the ancient nomadic motifs. Throughout the medieval and early modern period the nomadic motifs continued in Indian jewellery and metal craft. The motifs still continue in the modern period. Not only in jewellery but also in Indian textiles (produced from various states) the nomadic motifs percolate. An interesting brass lamp shade which I had bought from Uttar Pradesh shows nomadic affiliations. It is similar to the openwork cone-shaped head-dress from Ak-Burun barrow.<sup>1</sup>

Going back to the north-west, (the region of transit of so many 'Indian' idioms) various objects still in use in the Swat valley, reflect the animal style. Some specimens are kept in the Linden Museum and they attest to the continuation and perhaps the recreation of the Scythian art. These consist of

---

<sup>1</sup> *Scy.Art.*, Pl. 229.

wooden livestock amulets,<sup>1</sup> bells, simple everyday objects, and tools, like a drumstick, a catapult, a spindle, and a hammer. These are decorated by the carvers as if in homage to the Śaka/Scythian art of the eighth century B.C. to the fourth century A.D. The small selection of medicine spoons<sup>2</sup> from Swat are impressive evidences (Plate 225) that such items need not be boring; the individuality and creativity in the treatments of the handles is notable .

Large wooden ladles, with floral and geometric decorations,<sup>3</sup> also reflect the nomadic style. Ornaments like wrought silver neck rings with engraved and punched geometric decorations, earrings, arm-rings from Swat reveal the Śaka/Scythian elements. The component parts of pectoral ornaments (Plate 226)<sup>4</sup> found from the Swat valley echo the Śaka/Scythian elements.

Thus, these objects and tools were decorated by the carvers with the imagery of the Śaka/Scythian art of the eighth century B.C. to the fourth century A.D. The treatment of the individual tools, and their handles are an

---

<sup>1</sup> Johannes Kalter, *The Arts and Crafts of the Swat Valley. Living Traditions in the Hindu Kush*, Thames and Hudson, 1991, p. 12, Fig.7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.13, Fig. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12, Fig. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

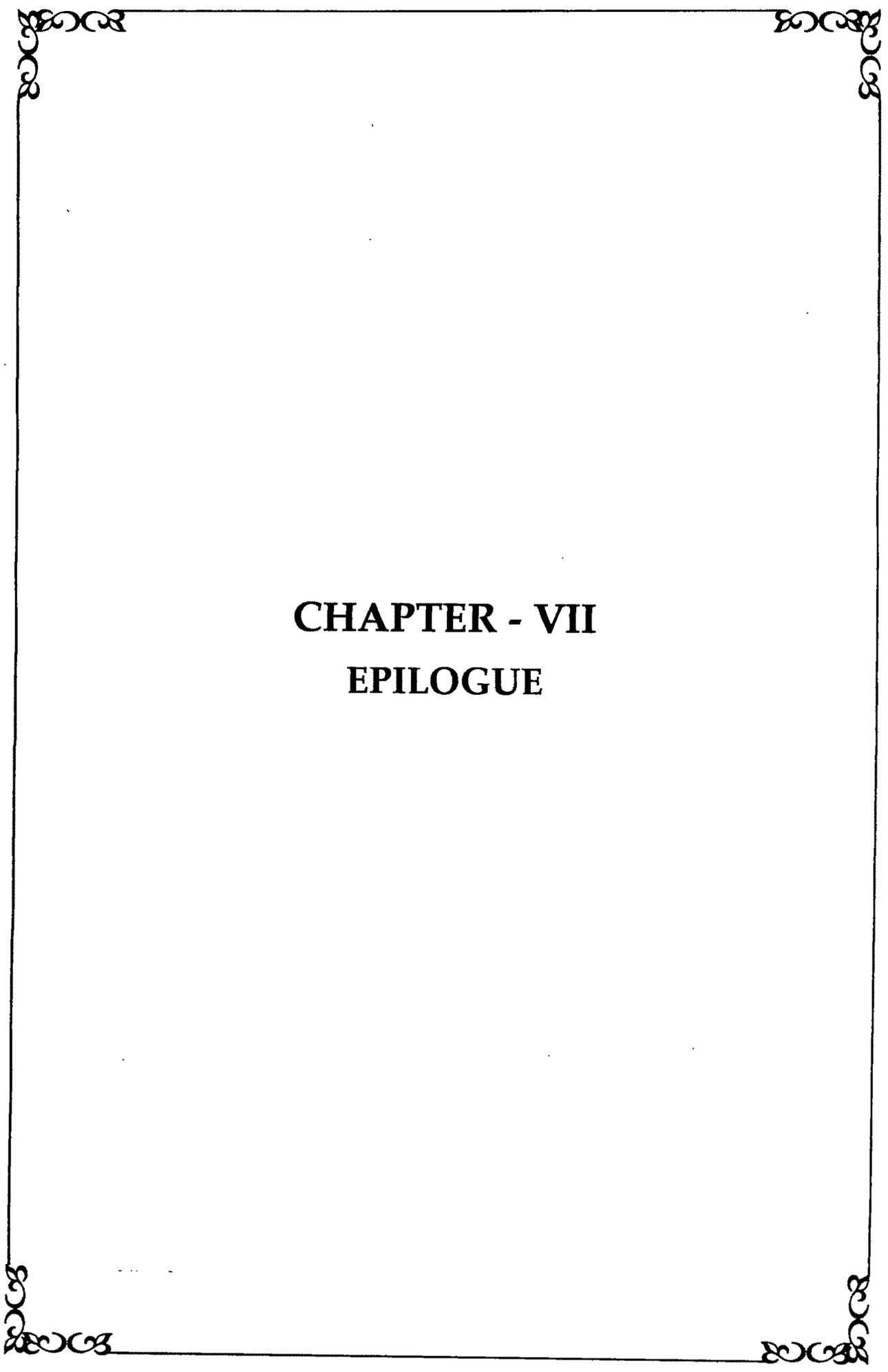
object lesson for designers. Their technique was steeped in the nomadic tradition, and at the same time it suited their practical functions. Animal amulets with geometric and simple plant motifs, rosettes and stylized ram's horns still continue. In other areas of the subcontinent the ram's heads gradually disappears, as it loses its shamanistic symbolism and séance.<sup>1</sup> In India, ram's horns or stags are less common in the later period. In the early Scythian period, Siberian shamanism dominated. There the shamanistic séance was a symbolic journey in which the shaman becomes a horned animal (a deer or a reindeer) in order to restrain his animal wife, the daughter of the spirit of the forest.<sup>2</sup> This deer motif therefore ceased to be irrelevant in the Indian context.

Thus, we are seeing new phenomena or simply seeing the ancient Śaka/Scythian repertoire with a new vision. The obvious courage of treatment that so delights us and which only the large perception of the nomadic world can inspire continues to be felt fairly strongly indeed in Indian art.

---

<sup>1</sup> Gilles Boileau, 'Wu and Shaman', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol.65, part 2, London, 2002, p. 353.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 353.



**CHAPTER - VII**  
**EPILOGUE**