

**Identification of Issuer Ruler Through Engraved Images on Coins: With  
Reference To Kushan Period**

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**Abstract**

This research article presents the method of identifying the issuing ruler through special inscriptions engraved on coins issued by the Kushan period rulers in India during the Kushan rule. Each ruler in the Kushan period used to issue his coins and those coins had a special sign of that particular ruler, which has been presented with figures of coins in this article. After referring the coins figure in this article and by integrating the inscriptions on it, the concerned ruler can be easily identified and the Kushan ruler who issued the coin can also be easily identified. Study of the identity of the issuer ruler based on the particular sign of the coins doesn't come under the cognizance of the researcher.

**Introduction**

The Kushans were tribes belonging to the country of China who migrated from their original place as nomads and settled permanently in the Indian subcontinent while fighting with their contemporary tribes in the northern region and laid the foundation of a dynasty. In the past, the Kushan dynasty was known by their tribal name Yu-chi, which later came to be called Kushan by the name of their powerful chieftain Koi Swang. Kushans came to the North Indian subcontinent residing in many terrains, so they were influenced by many cultures. They issued many types of coins which represented the Greeks as well as Indian religions like Shaivites, Buddhists etc. Coins are found in abundance in the Indian subcontinent. On all those coins, the ruler who issued them has made a special mark through which Identify coins and the issuer ruler can be identified.

**Objective**

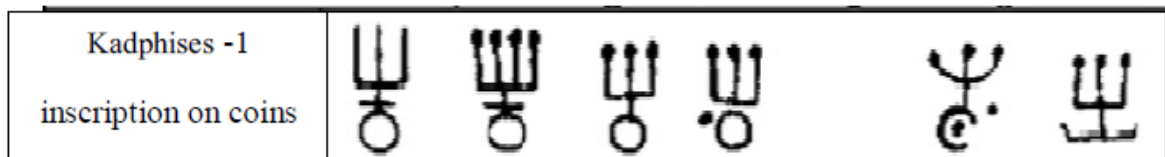
1. Presentation of inscriptions inscribed on Kushan period coins.

2. Presentation to identifying the issuing ruler with special inscriptions engraved on Kushan period coins.
3. Presentation and integration of the Kushan ruler with his special sign.
4. Presentation of the religious aspect of the rulers through Kushan period coins.

## Research material and writing method

Research material has been obtained from many literary sources by the researcher in the presented article. The proposed article has been written through descriptive study method. The contents of the article submitted by the researcher have been compiled and analyzed themselves and also presented in this article through pictures.

## Kujul Kadphises (Kadphises -1)



About Kujul, more information is found in Mudrasastra than in the inscription. It shows that initially, he had held the title of 'Yabug,' that is, but later he was holding great titles like 'Maharaja', 'Maharajadhiraja' etc<sup>1</sup>. All the currency of Kujul is found in copper His rule over Taxila and Gandhara is confirmed by the huge Tamra Mudra Nidhi from his 'Sirkap'. There are camels on the obverse and the back of his posture (Fig.-01), which shows that the tribes of Central Asia crossed the desert and came on camels and they took control of the Hindukush<sup>2</sup>.



Figure Number-01

Kujul made his coin only after emulating the currency of the Roman ruler Claudius<sup>3</sup>. The reign of the Roman ruler Claudius was from 41 AD to 54 AD. This means that Kujul was also ruling in 41 AD and this is also the time of Gondopharnis<sup>4</sup>. From the book inscription, the rule of Gondopharnis can be said to have begun in 20 AD. On the coins of Kujul Kadphises, "Kujul Kasas Kashan Yavugas Dharmastham" is written, This means that Kujul is the Kushan ruler Believes in religion. Another article has been found in it he is called "Satyadharmadhitgya" which means he believed in Buddhism<sup>5</sup>. The historian B. Thapar has considered Kujul Kadphises as a Buddhist religion<sup>6</sup>. There is more evidence of Kujul being Shaiva rather than Buddhist. There are also coins showing the friendship of Kujul from the Greek ruler Hermius, on which the figure of Hermius is engraved<sup>7</sup> (Fig. No.-02).

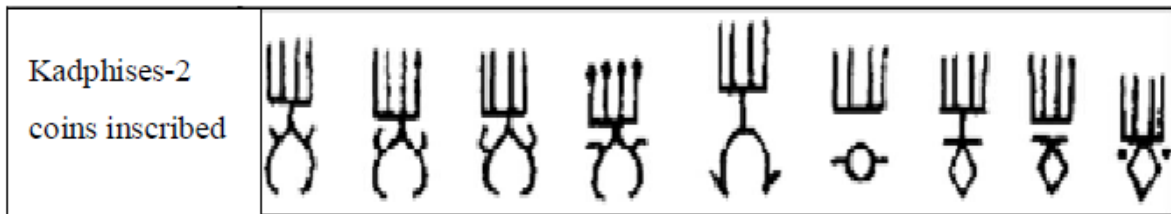


Figure Number-02

It is kept in the British Museum<sup>8</sup>. Any title not mentioned in the article of Kharoshthi script related to Kujul but there is a mention in the Greek script which proclaims that initially he would have been an assistant or subordinate to the Greek ruler<sup>9</sup>. It is also likely that Kujul would have conquered the other four branches only with the help of Hermius. That is why in later coins, he looks embellished with huge titles like "Maharajas Rajatirajas Kujul Kaphas"<sup>10</sup>. Its coins appear to be similar to the coins of the Greek ruler Claudius and the Roman Augustus. The time of Augustus was around around 27 BCE to 14 BCE. On this basis, the time of Kujul can also be considered as same. According to Allen it is clear from the archaism of Taxila that the posture of Kadphises is somewhat later than that of Gondopharnies. So that it can be placed in the third phase of the first century<sup>11</sup>. 'D.C. Sarkar' and 'A.K. Majumdar' have considered the rule of Kujul from 15 AD to 65 AD and Smith from 77-78 AD but 15 to 65 AD seems to be the most appropriate as 65 to 78 AD can be considered as the time of 'Vim Kadficus'. The time of Kanishka starts from 78 AD. Thus everyone also gets a hierarchy. We see that Kuzul Cadficus appears to be trying to satisfy all

the important powerful rulers and religions of the then society with his currency policy. Attempting to satisfy all the classes and to maintain the good relations he worked politically in currency formation. According to Chinese evidence, 'Kujul Cadficus' died at the age of 80.

## Vim Kadphises (Kadphises-2)



'Vim Kadphises' was the son of 'Kujul Kadphises'. Its name is found in Chinese literature as Cao-chen or Yen-Cao-chen. In the historian Phon-ye's treatise named 'Hu-han-shu', it is found that he conquered 'Tien-yu'<sup>12</sup>(India) and there he appointed military officer. Appointed those who, ruled there in the name of Kushans. Vim Kadphises got the empire of Kabul, Gandhara, Persia and North West India in succession from Kujul. It crossed Indus River and reached Mathura. That is, it was the first Kushan ruler who established power on the part of India. After that Vim Kadphises adopted the imperialist policy and modern texts show that his empire had expanded to Banaras. At the time of Vim Kadphises, India's relations became from a commercial point of view with China and Rome. Its currency was a replica of the Roman rulers Agastak and Tiberius<sup>13</sup>. A war took place near the Caspian Sea<sup>14</sup> between The Chinese generals Pan-Chao and Kushan Viceroy "shi" of Vim Kadphises resulted into defeat of Vim Kadphises and he had to accept punishment<sup>15</sup>. To promote trade, for the first time the Vim Kadphises introduced gold currency and popularized it. This currency was of 124 grains<sup>16</sup>. At the same time, the export of silk, gems and spices from India began to bring Roman gold to India. When the economic condition of India improved, Indian art also flourished with that wealth. The currencies of Vim Kadphises were of gold and copper. These currencies excavated far away from India in areas such as Auxas, Up to Kabul and in India to Kausambi, Buxar, Basaad, and Kasia<sup>17</sup>.

If we pay attention to the religious life of Vim Kadphises, then it was Shaivistic, we get the information from his coins which show the shape of his real picture on the front and Nandi's picture on the back surface. Back oriented Shiva, Trishul, Charmagrahi etc. are also found (Fig. No.03) on the coins<sup>18</sup>.



**Figure Number-03**

Along with this, Vim Kadphises also held a title named Mahishvara which shows his inclination towards Shaivism<sup>19</sup>. It clearly shows the inclination, but he was also tolerant for other religions. In his time, 'Kashyap Mathang' and 'Dharma Ratna' went to China to propagate Buddhism. To mark the conquest of Indian Territory, he started a coin in which he showed him sitting on an elephant. It has been found that this currency has been received from Banaras to commemorate this victory. To commemorate this victory, he helded great title like 'Maharajas Rajatirajas Survallog Ishvarastha Mahishvarasya Vim Kathfisas Traataras' and inscribed on the currencies<sup>20</sup>. 'Bacillias amo cudficus' is marked on its front. It is also a matter of looking at the currencies of 'Vim Kadphises' that in all they are shown to be of the same age and the currencies of the 'Huvishka' are the same as their currencies. That is why 'Huvishka' is considered by 'Rosenfield' to be the son of 'Vim'<sup>21</sup>. It was the last ruler whose coins or articles used Greek-Kharoshthi and Greek-Prakrit script.

### **Sotar megas**

After Vim Kadphises and before Kanishka there was a suspicious ruler 'Soter Megus', the situation is not clear about it, some scholars make it similar to Vim because the coins of its name are found from Punjab, Kabul, Kandhar<sup>22</sup> (Figure No.04).



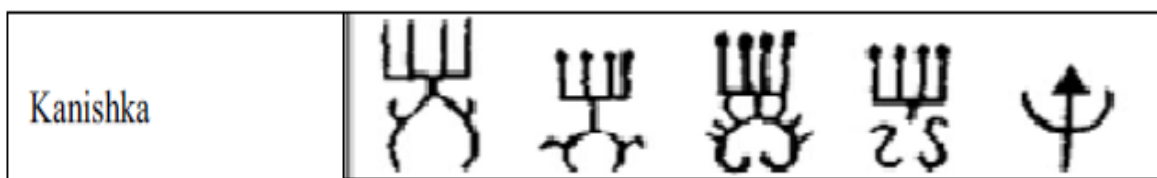
**Figure Number-04**

It can either be considered the title of Vim or it was the Taxila governor of Kujul and Vim who must have revolted and cast their independent coins and ruled for some time. D McDowell also supports this view in a paper titled 'Implementation for Kushan Chronology of the New Mismatical Context of the Name Less King'<sup>23</sup> but But Vincent Smith considers it as the governor of Vim and Kanishka times.

## Gionik- zenius

A few coins mentioning this name have been found and a 191 AD inscription has also been found. 'Van Lehiijn Deilu' has described it as the nephew of Vim Kadphises, who must have gained power after Vim, but 'Stone kone' has denied it. He propped After 'Vim', its rank increased but it never became an independent ruler. A scholar also calls it a descendant of Gondopharnis and 'Tarn' is also of the opinion that this 'Gondofarniz' was 'satrap' who sat on the independent ruler of Pushklawati<sup>24</sup> taking advantage of any circumstance. None of the opinions are acceptable, so it can also be considered a 'satrap'.

## Kanishka



Kanishka's genealogical tree is found in the Rabatak inscription obtained in 1993 AD from a place called Rabtak near the place called Surkha Kotal in Afghanistan (Fig. No.05).

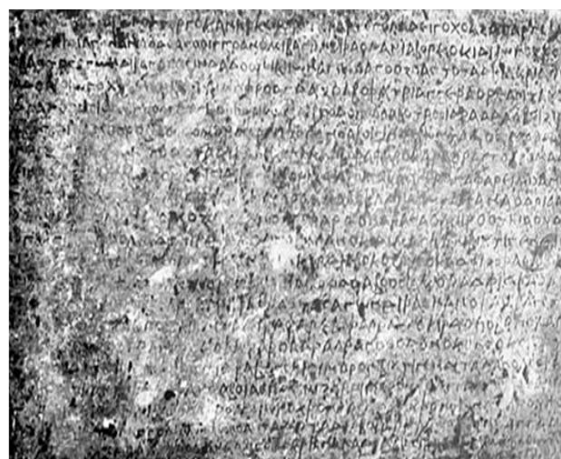


Figure Number-05

Although Kanishka is considered the third ruler in the Kushan dynasty, but Kanishka is the fourth ruler in the Rabataka inscription. It is said that 'Fleet' has considered Kanishka from a small Yu-Chi branch based on the life character of Ashwaghosh. 'Kono' has the idea that Kanishka came from 'Khotan' and He has presented on the basis of Tibetan sources<sup>25</sup>. 'Kumarlat' in his book namely Kalpanamanditika has related the relationship of Kanishka to a tribe called Kiyu-shu (Kush or Kush)<sup>26</sup>. In the Manikiala inscription of Kanishka, "Gushan dynasty enrichment" mentions the word. Here gushan can be considered as Kushan only.

It is proven that 'Kanishka' was Kushan and that Kushan was originated from main Yu-Chi. So it is certain that 'Kanishka' was also from the main Yu-Chi branch. Many scholars believe that Vim died childless and that Kanishka was the governor who took power with military might, but Kumar Baldev has accepted Kanishka as the son of Vim<sup>27</sup>. Kanishka was the greatest ruler among the Kushans. Historians consider the ascension of Kanishka to herald a new era. If we explain the word Kanishka, according to Jain texts, Kanishka belonged to the Kiu-sha family. 'KAN' stands for young man<sup>28</sup>. The Kushan rulers after Kanishka and at the time of Kanishka use the word "shka" (Ishka, Eshka) after their name. He too assumed the title of Devaputra like his ancestors. He too assumed the title of Devaputra like his ancestors. On the basis of the currency received from Taxila, Marshall has clarified that Kanishka was a member of the Kadphises family. Greek, Sumerian, Amelite, Persian, Indian goddesses like Oisho, Ayasho, Voddo, Mao, Miero, Nana, Arlengno, Forre, Helion, etc., depicted on Kanishka's coins<sup>29</sup>. Here is Iso-Shiva, Miro-Iranian Mithra Sun, Mao-Chandra, Nana-Sumerian Mother Goddess, Helios-Greek Sun, Seleni-Greek Moon can be consider. Many scholars also call Kanishka as second Ashoka. It is said that Kasnishka bravery like Chandragupta Maurya and inclination towards Buddhism as Ashoka<sup>30</sup>. He also had the Buddha's marking on his coin (Picture no. 06).



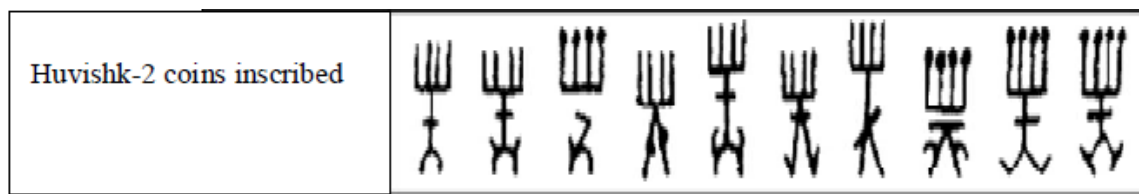
Figure Number-06

During the time of Kanishka, Buddhism spread far and wide<sup>31</sup>. Chinese literature and Central Asian texts call it Chakravarti. Buddhist texts do not write him great simply because he could not renounce violence and weapons till the end of his life and kept believing in his war policy.

## Vashishka

The rule of Vashishka was only till 24–28 regarding Kanishka Samvat, for this reason he would not have received any currency, probably he would have been dependent on the currency of Kanishka. He founded the Jushkapur (modern zugar<sup>32</sup>). At this time<sup>33</sup>, a big work was done that Vidisha was no longer in the hands of the Satavahanas and came under the suzerainty of the Kushans.

## Huvishka



This Kanishka Samvat was enthroned from 26 to 62 i.e. 138 AD. We get to see the name of Huvishka in the article written in the statue of Amitabha Buddha<sup>34,35</sup>. Some historians are of the opinion that there were two different Hushishkas who have accepted uncle and nephew in the relationship<sup>36</sup>. There is a view behind this that the Ara inscription mentions Huvishka as a contemporary of Vasishka and Kanishka-2. Marshall has stated on the basis of a new inscription from Mathura that he did not hold the title of Rajadhiraja in the writings before the 40th year and after the 40th year he is seen as holding the title of Rajadhiraja<sup>37</sup>. Its empire was huge, its coins have been found from Kapisha<sup>38</sup> in the north to Bihar in the east. These coins were of gold and copper, it means that the economic situation was good at that time. One of his articles has been found from the Wardak<sup>39</sup> of Afghanistan, which makes it clear that his empire was even till Wardak. This was the time when the center of power of the Kushans had shifted from Peshawar to Mathura. If we look at the religious life of Huvishka, it is known that he was personally a follower of Brahmin religion but he He was not intolerant of any other religion. On his coins are found the pictures of Shiva, Skanda, Kumar,

Visakh, Mahasen. Hukishka period 2 coins picture number - 07, 08, on which the inscribed symbol can be identified to be its time period (Figure No. 07, 08).

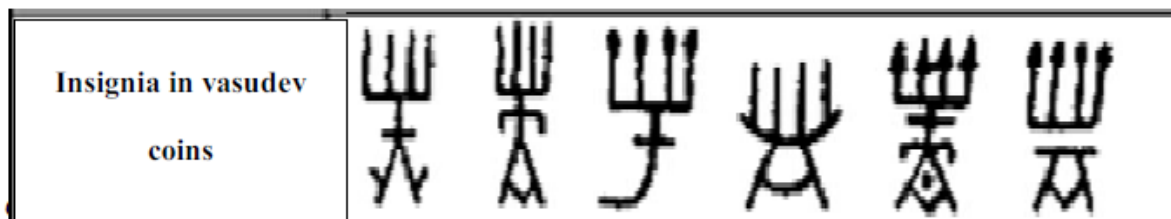


**Figure Number-07**



**Figure Number-08**

**Vashudev**



Vasudeva was the last ruler of the Kanishka family (not Kadphises). He ruled from 64 or 67 to Kanishka samvat it means 98 to 176 AD<sup>40</sup>. The full influence of Indianness on him is made clear by his name Vasudeva<sup>41</sup>. In his inscription, he has been decorated with titles like Maharaj Devaputra Vasudev<sup>42</sup>, Maharaj Rajatiraj Devputrashahi Vasudev<sup>43</sup>. We have received the postures of Vasudev from Bagram<sup>44</sup>, Sirkap, Taxila, Jamalagarhi<sup>45</sup>, Sahare Bahlol<sup>46</sup>. If we talk about the religious life of Vasudev he was Shaiva because on his coins Lord Shiva has shown with his vehicle Nandi<sup>47</sup> (Picture No.-09) and if we see his name, then he would look Vaishnav with Vasudev. It is so clear from all these facts that by the time Vasudeva became the ruler, Kushans had completely settled in Indian culture and had become full-fledged Indians. It is also seen by the dress of Vasudev<sup>48</sup>.

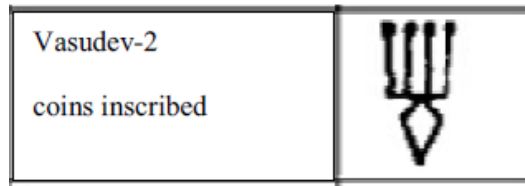


**Figure Number-09**

**Kanishka -3**

A record of this is found in a drain named Ara near a place called Bagh Neelabh<sup>49</sup> which is 10 miles far from Catuck Pakistan. Its currencies are found from Bactria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Punjab.

**Vasudev-2**



It was Kanishka-3 son who was a satrap during his time and later sat on his throne. Its coins are excavated only from Bactria and Afghanistan, so By this time, the areas of the northwest of undivided India i.e. Punjab and Pakistan were also taken away from their empire. Now the empire of the Kushans was limited to Bactria and Afghanistan. On its coins, there is a marking of Shiva and Nandi which shows that he has faith Shaivism. With this the Kushan Empire came to an end.



**A coin of Vasudev-2 period**

## Figure Number-10

### Acceptance and thanks giving

Books and other material written by many scholars have been taken in the presented article. Thanks to all the scholars whose content has been used in this article. Thanks to all the scholars.

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