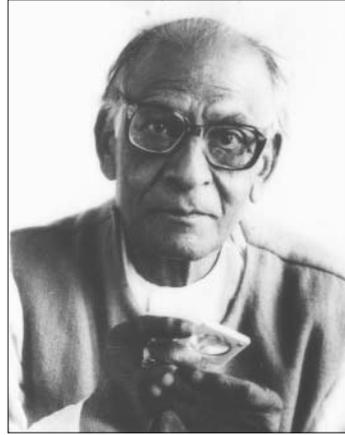


OBITUARIES

PARMESHWARI LAL GUPTA
(24.12.1914-29.7.2001)

Dr. Parmeshwari Lal Gupta, the doyen of Indian Numismatics and an ardent freedom fighter, was born on December 24th 1914 at Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh. In 1930, while he was at the Wesley High School, he was expelled for having organized a protest against the arrest of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru. He then joined the Indian National Congress and became an ardent freedom fighter under its aegis in his Azamgarh district. Because of his activities, he was imprisoned several times by the British government. He was so popular amongst the masses as their leader that he was called *Azamgarh ke Nehru* (Jawahar Lal Nehru of Azamgarh).



In 1947, when the country was freed from the clutches of British imperialism, he felt that his goal was achieved and he retired from political activities. Thereafter he devoted his full life to the quest of knowledge. He returned to student life, obtaining the degree of M. A. in Ancient Indian History and Culture in First Class. Lastly, in 1960, he obtained his Ph. D. from the Benaras Hindu University.

The Social Worker and the Journalist

Besides being a freedom fighter, Dr. Gupta, in those early days, was equally a fighter against social evils. He struggled hard to eliminate a number of evils which were prevailing in the Agarwal community and was successful in his efforts. He organized there Agarwal Yuwak sangh and Agarwal Sevak mandal for this purpose. He also took interest in education of the people of the town. He established a public library there. To promote female education, which was lacking at the time, he opened a primary school for girls that eventually evolved into a degree-granting college for young women, which was a great contribution not only to the town of Azamgarh but to the district as well. For this, he is held in great esteem amongst the people of Azamgarh. In between his struggle for freedom and his educational pursuits, he worked as a journalist for about 15 years and served in the editorial department of the two nationalist Hindi dailies *Aaj* (Varanasi) and *Sainik* (Agra).

The Numismatist and Museologist

Dr. Gupta worked as an assistant curator in Bharat Kalabhavan, Varanasi, from 1950 to 1954, and as a numismatist in the Prince of Wales Museum until 1962 when he went on deputation to the British Museum for a year. From 1963 to 1972, he worked as Curator (Director) of the Patna Museum, Patna. After his retirement, he settled in Nashik where he founded the Indian Institute of Research in Numismatic Studies. Housing his considerable collection of books and numismatic photographs, it is the only institution of its kind in Asia.

Over his long career (his first article on numismatics was published in the Journal of the Indian Numismatic Society as early as 1942), Dr. Gupta wrote thirty-two books and monographs and over two hundred and fifty research papers. He was a definitive scholar of India's most ancient coins, known as punch-marked coins. His book *Coins in the series India. Land and People* is a detailed and accessible account on the coinage of India. His last book, *Paper Money of India*, is the first book on the subject.

Dr. Gupta was the recipient of numerous awards. The Numismatic Society of India honoured him with its Chakravikrama Medal in 1954, the Nelson Wright Medal in 1962 and elected him as Honorary Fellow in 1972. The Royal Numismatic Society also elected him as Honorary Fellow in 1975. The same year, the Asiatic Society of Calcutta awarded him the Sir Jodunath Sarkar Gold medal in recognition of his researches in Medieval Indian Numismatics. In 1986, Dr. Gupta was made an Honorary member of the International Numismatic Commission and, in 1987, he received the Archer M. Huntington Medal from the American Numismatic Society. In 1993, he was elected Honorary Fellow of the Asiatic Society of Bombay.

Besides his achievements in the field of numismatics, Dr. Gupta was also renowned in the field of history, archaeology and Hindi literature.

He died in Bombay and is survived by his wife Annapurna, and his four children.

Le Secrétariat de la CIN¹

1. Cette nécrologie se fonde sur les informations envoyées à l'ANS par le Public Trust for the advancement of Numismatics (Gopal das Guladavadi Devi Memorial Trust, Mumbai) et publiées, en partie dans la *Newsletter* 89, Fall 2001, de l'ANS, p. 9. Nos remerciements à Ute Wartenberg.