Karatoya: NBU J. Hist. Vol. 5 :122-131(2012) ISSN: 2229-4880

The Art of Embellishments under Mughals

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Though the history of Indian jewellery dates back as far as the Indus Valley Civilization, it is only from the Mughal period onwards that there is well documented information on this craftsmanship. Perhaps, the greatest contribution made by Mughals is to the art of embellishments. Exquisite jewellery items were made from gold, with stone encrusted in the front and enameled back. The finishing of the work of art took on importance. [1]The Mughals, influenced by Hindu superstitions, took to wearing stones for luck. In astrology, the nine planets of the solar system are represented by precious stones. The navratna as the Mughals called it became extremely popular among the Mughals and necklaces and bracelets of uncut stones became typical specimens of the jewellery of that period. Mughals exhibited a pooled finesse of Persian approach and indigenous traditions of the Rajputs. It emerged as an influential and confident imperial culture which was distinctively Indian but, at its best, lithe and receptive to ideas from the world outside. Numerous miniature pictures of Mughal princes and Ladies and exhibits in the great museums of the world, give impression that life in Mughal court and for the nobility was one of unimaginable luxury, and this impression is confirmed by reports from European ambassadors, merchants and artists. Jewellery has been an obsession with women of all ages and times. Ornaments are worn not only for the purpose of attracting the attention of others around but also as a distinctive mark of status, rank and dignity. Indian women too showed a great liking for jewellery since times immemorial. Both Hindus and Muslims have given religious significance to the use of ornaments. A touch of gold on the woman's body is considered to be auspicious. Muslims lay emphasis on holy amulets and ornaments with stone settings, and their basic intention in wearing ornaments is to secure protection against evil eyes.[2]

As an aphorism, succinctly coined by Roe, 'In jewels here is the treasury of the world.'[3]

For rulers, precious stones and jewels were not only a means of ambiance or adornment but, formed the currency of power in Mughal India. It was an easy means of wealth which they could carry and use for payments regarding military campaigns and a vital part of the apparatus of monarchy and diplomacy. This was nothing new in the '*Arthashastra*', a Sanskrit treatise on governance, kings were advised the treasury has its source in the mines, from the treasury the army, the earth is obtained with the treasury as its ornament. In his journal, the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri,* Jahangir himself testified to the importance that gems and jewels bore in the empire. Military servants who captured diamond-bearing territory were liberally praised.[4]

By the reign of Jahangir (1605-27) jewels were worn prominently possession of the finest gems also carried symbolic power, bolstering the legitimacy of rule. A.S. Melikian Chirvani argues that the Mughal emperors looked to Iranian models of kingship as envisioned in the Shah-nama or book of the kings, surrounding themselves with jewelled objects that

became part of the insignia of power, particularly from Jahangir's reign onwards. Jewels were the focus of court ceremonial when courtiers presented jewelled objects, which were assessed and their value recorded, and of royal birthday ceremonies in which the emperor was weighed against gold, then jewels, silver and other items in turn and his weight in silver coins distributed among the poor.[5]

In assessing the extent of Jahangir's treasury, William Hawkins resorted to the use of the 'battman', a Turkish measure typically reserved for grain and other bulky goods, which was equal to 55 English pounds and reckoned that Jahangir had 82 pounds i.e., more than 30 kg of diamonds, none smaller than 2 carats. There were 12 battmans of pearls, 5 of emeralds, and 2 of rubies and in addition 5 thousand pieces of cornelian, 2 thousand spinels, and an inestimable number of semi-precious stones. Jewelled swords were numbered in thousands, gem-studded saddles at one thousand and multiples of spectacular thrones, royal umbrellas, and lances. For delicate embellishment, 2000 brooches for turbans and uncountable chains of pearls and stones, rings with jewels. Hawkins guessed of 2000 battmans of silver and 1000 of gold plates. Even in the relatively spartan ambiance of his prayer room, Jahangir could call on eight 400-bead rosaries strung with pearls, spinels, diamonds, rubies, emeralds, jade, and coral.[6]

Spinels (sometimes erroneously called balas rubies) were prized above other precious stones in the Mughal imperial treasuries and survive in huge size engraved with imperial inscriptions. In the classification of gemstones recorded by the court historian, Abul Fazl in his account of the treasury of the emperor Akbar (1556-1605), spinels appear to be the most important both from the fact that they are listed first and from the financial values allotted to them preceding diamonds, rubies, sapphires, emeralds and pearls. Spinels were admired for their red colour, which in the Persian literature dominant in Mughal India symbolized both wine and the sun, evoking the light of dusk. The carew spinel carved with minute yet perfectly controlled Persian inscriptions bearing the titles of the Mughal emperors who owned its, attesting to the skill of the Mughal lapidaries. In November 1617, Jahangir reciprocated Shah Jahan's display of loyalty with a gift of his own: '*On this day I made a present to my son Shah Jahan of a ruby of one colour, weighing 9 tanks and 5 surkh (184 carats)of the value of 125,000 rupees, with two pearls. This is the ruby which was given to my father at the time of my birth by Hazrat Maryam-Makani, mother of His Majesty Akbar, by way of present when my face was shown, and was for many years in his* sarpich (turban brooch). *After him I also happily wore it in my* sarpich. *Apart from its value and delicacy, as it had come down as of auspicious augury to the everlasting State, it was bestowed on my son.*'[7]

Other noteworthy stones include the *Agra*, a pinkish diamond of 31 ½ carats; the *Akbar Shah* diamond, allegedly a stone of 116 carats and inscribed with the names of Akbar's son and grandson, Jahangir and Shah Jahan. (The inscription of diamonds and its perfection by the Mughal lapidaries was a measure of their consummate skill.) Large spinels inscribed with the possessor's name and imperial titles were similarly handed on in dynastic succession. These were often strung as single pendants, or were combined with pearls in necklaces or *bazubands* (jeweled ties encircling the upper arm). The big diamonds could

also be strung as pendants or necklaces. Alternatively, like the auspicious ruby Jahangir mentions in his journal, they could be displayed in the ornament that adorned his turban. The journal is replete with mentions of different turban ornaments, a range of jeweled plumes, aigrettes, and turban fringes which formed a central part of Mughal royal dress and featured prominently in imperial iconography. Almost without exception, Indian kings who came after the Mughals, Hindus as well as Muslims, adopted a version of their turban ornamentation as a symbol of their own royal status.

The love of precious stones has a long history in the Islamic world. Pearls played an especially importance role during the time of the Mughals. Double and triple strands of pearls were symbols of nobility by the time of Akbar. When a visitor or ambassador presented the ruler with an especially beautiful large or regular pearl the gift would be accepted with pleasure. In a miniature from about 1619 depicting Shah Jahan wearing two strands of large pearls around his neck, his turban has also large rows of pearls. Aurangzeb wears a few thick ropes of pearls over a green costume. Noble ladies and gentlemen were never seen without their pearl necklaces whether flirting on the terrace of the Harem or even asleep in their bed. Even the servants, courts ladies and singers were never portrayed without pearl jewellery, pearls or precious stones were used to make earrings, which came in various forms from large plain pearls studs for the earlobe to complicated pendants. Earrings or studs for the men appear to have come into the fashion under Jahangir. Moreover large pearls were used as a buttons for beautiful and luxurious kaftans. Such buttons buttons was also recommended for the true gentleman, sometimes decoration strands of pearls are seen hanging from the belt of a nobleman they were probably a standard accessory to a particular type of robe of honour. The Mughal Emperor in order to fasten the strands of pearls which were occasionally wrapped around turbans either the sarpati was used, an oval fastening made of precious stones. The string of pearls which was wrapped around the turban might also be interspersed with rubies, with another emerald at the back of the turban.[8]

Influences on Mughal Jewellery- The existing trends in jewellery under the Mughals were a continuation of the amalgamated style of Islamic and Hindu artistic styles. Islamic influences had been seen in the subcontinent as far back as the 8th century and excavations have unearthed remarkable material which shows the adaptability on both sides of the equation - traditional Islamic and traditional Indian - and the originality and creativity of artists in the region in adjusting to new influences, creating new styles and expanding horizons. A number of Islamic powers had been establishing base in India before the advent of the Mughals. These include the Ghaznavids, the Ghurids, and the Turkish and Afghan dynasties that broke away from the Sultanate in Delhi. Babur was the first Mughal ruler and he had seized power from the Lodhi Dynasty in India. Thus the culmination of centuries of Islamic rule was seen in the Mughal dynasty and all these collective influences were witnessed in their life, art, architecture and crafts, including in jewellery. [9]

Influence of Rajputs- Some of the finest goldsmiths' works have been produced under the Mughal patronage. The colours were not just exclusive to Jaipur, and were found on much eighteenth-century jewellery from centres as far apart as Murshidabad and the Deccan. Some areas, such as Rajasthan, were able to resist being completely overwhelmed, because

Rajasthan undoubtedly contributed a great deal to the formation of the hybrid Mughal style: its princess's married Mughal royalty and its rulers had taken high positions at court, both bringing their jewellery and, probably, their craftsmen with them. The Rajputs had also contributed jewelled and gold articles to the emperor's treasury. In Rajasthan itself, there are restrictions on the use of certain types of gold jewellery. In general, Hindus do not wear gold on the feet, as it is a sacred metal, which would thus be defiled. However, in Rajasthan 'the anklet of gold (worn by men) worn on one or both feet is a proof of nobility as well as of being entitled to a certain position at a Durbar.[10]

Mughal Art in India in Meenakari,

Meenakari is basically an ancient form of art in India that has been praised since its introduction for the superb designs and combination of colours. From the prime age of this craft, the artisans were named as 'meenakar' who were involved in creating different Meenakari items. In some work, the entire object, such as pendant, is covered with this exclusive technique. On a typical pair of 'kara' bangles with three-dimensional 'makara', elephant, lion or bird head terminals, additionally decorated with diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, as they often were, is a dazzlingly opulent object that embodies a galaxy of goldsmith arts. A special type is 'ek rang khula mina', in which single-colour transparent enamel fills all engraved area, leaving gold outlines exposed around figural details. 'Pachrangi mina' (five-colour enamel) is a special multicoloured style of enamelling. The five colours used are 'safed' (opaque white), 'fakhtai' (opaque light blue) from 'fakhta' (a dove), 'khula nila' (transparent dark blue), 'khula sabz' (transparent green), 'khula lal' (transparent red). [11]

History of Meenakari - Meenakari is the art of decorating metal with enamelling. It was introduced by the Mughals though originated in Persia. Raja Man Singh of Amber brought this art to Rajasthan. He invited skilful meenakars from the Mughal palace at Lahore and established them in Jaipur, which became the centre of Meenakari later on in India. Meenakari design needs a high degree of skill and techniques. Colours like red, green and white, dominate this art of enamelling. Nathdwara, Bikaner and Udaipur are the famous centres for silver Meenakari. Pratapgarh is known for glass enamelling. Delhi and Varanasi are also important centres for exclusive Meenakari designs. In India, Meenakari work has developed in the places like Punjab and Lucknow including the other Meenakari centres of India.

Techniques of Meenakari Art - The design for the Meenakari in India is made on the metal surface by the craftsmen called 'chitras'. The design is engraved by the 'gharias' such that depressions are created. Sometimes the Meenakari is combined with the art of 'Kundan' to make the created articles an amalgamation of enamelling and stone carving. After the design is created the enameller applies different colours with brushes on the engraved design. The base is first covered by white or pink enamel, upon which different colours are applied in order of their hardness. It is then heated to enhance the richness of the colours. 'Gulabi mina' (pink enamel) is derived from 'gulab' (rose) which has been popularly associated with the Varanasi enamelling style. It includes areas of painted enamel, generally flowers, executed in translucent pink on an opaque white ground. All other enamelled

areas on the object are created in the 'champleve' style, which makes this a mixed style of enamelling. The technique requires at least five separate enamel applications.

When a single transparent coloured enamel is used to fill the ground around an opaque figure, various colour of ground like 'lal zamin' (transparent red ground), 'sabz zamin' (transparent green ground), 'nil zamin' (transparent blue ground) are chosen to contrast with and set off that of the subject. 'Bandh mina khaka' (opaque cartouche or outline) is a technique in which the figure in transparent colour is surrounded by an opaque enamel cartouche. The object when ready is polished and cleaned. Generally hand burnishes are used to cover any exposed metal.

Forms of Meenakari Art - Besides jewellery other items which were known for their Meenakari work were various shaped huqqas, pandans, flasks, sprinklers and a lot more. Huqqas were a favourite item for the Meenakari Artists. Various hues and ambitious designs were used in the Meenakari Art which was part of the huqqas. Different shaped huqqas with the engraved Meenakri work were made during the Mughal period.

Pandan is another piece of art work which sees profuse use of meenakari work. Pandans of the Mughal era are found in all the three metals namely gold, silver and copper.

It can be said that both silver and gold metals are used as the base for Meenakari work in India. At present time, Meenakari is done in the metals like silver and copper to suit the need and style of the modern people. In addition to the jewelleries and other items, the Meenakars create exclusive items that serve the decorative purpose. The items that are created with amazing artistry include Meenakari bowl set, chowki set, Hand Casted Meenakari Chowki with White alloy metal, Meenakari arm chair, Meenakari almirah, Meenakari roman chair, Meenakari gun box cum seater, utility box thrones, dining set, decorative frames, key holder, photo frames, ash trays, pen holder etc. [12]

Moghul Anklets-There are different kinds of ankle-ornaments worn by the Mughal Ladies. Chura consisting of two hollow half circlets which when joined together formed a complete ring; another one Dundhani was engravedform of the first; next is known as Masuchi which was like the second but differently engraved. Pail or anklet called khalkhal in Arabic. These produced jingling sound when its wearer moved about. Ghunghru, consisting of small golden bells, usually six on each ankle and stung upon silk was worn between Jehar(three gold rings) and Khalkhal. Bhank was a triangular and square ornament for the instep. Bichhwah, another ornament for the instep was shaped like a half bell. Anwat was an ornament for the great toe. Other ornaments the women wear include Rings on their Toes, and Shekels on their Legs made hollow and some glass beads loose in them, that when move the leg they make a Noise like a rattle snake. These ornaments are generally made of gold studded with precious gems. The anklets which has gold rosettes, set alternately with diamonds or lidded and set with precious or semi-precious stones. This was acquired from exhibition as an anklet; despite the usual restrictions on wearing gold on the feet the diameter would be too great for a conventional armlet. Each alternate rosette is lidded and foiled in a colour, which matches its stone. The stones, beginning with the pearl and moving clockwise, are: blue sapphire, ruby, diamond, emerald, yellow sapphire, spinel, hessonite garnet, turquoise and

coral. These pair of anklets are made from gold with applied lozenges and stamped spheres imitating granulation. The imitation granulation was done by stamping sheet gold onto a shaped depression in a jeweller's mould.[13]

Moghul Jewellery for Head –The Mughal Ladies decorated every part of their bodies from head to toe. Abul Fazl describes thirty seven ornaments worn by the women in Mughal period of which five head ornaments like Sis-phul which was a bell shaped piece of gold and silver, hollow and embellished from inside with attachments fastened to the hair over the crown of the head, Mang was worn on the parting of the head, Kotbiladar, which consisted of five bands and a long centre drop was worn on the forehead, Sekra mainly used in marriage ceremonies and other special occasions consisted of seven or more strings of pearls linked to studs and hung from the forehead in such a manner as to conceal the face, and finally the Binduli, which was smaller than a gold mohar and worn on the forehead. Women sometimes wore turbans which often had in them valuable ornaments studded with precious stones and pearls. [14]

The hair ornaments are also gold sets with rubies, emeralds and diamonds and with strings of pearls and red glass beads from the Northern India in the mid 19th century. This hair ornament was an exhibition piece acquired by the Indian Museum in 1855. It would have been worn with the long coils, terminating in serpent heads, framing the face and the strings of pearls with pendants fanning out over the forehead.

Hand Ornaments- Abul Fazl describes lists of bracelets which include Kangan which were of different designs, surmounted with small knobs, Gajrah, a bracelets of gold and pearls. Chur a bracelets worn above the wrist; Bahu like the chur but little smaller; Churin thinner than the bracelets and worn in a bunch of seven or more. Sometimes the bracelets were in the form of pearl bands which went round the wrist nine or twelve times, Manucci being doctor found an obstruction for feeling the pulse as these were covered the wrist completely.

Arms without ornaments are a bad sign for the women in Mughal India. The upper part of the arms above the elbows were ornamented with armlets called Bazuband usually two inches wide, inlaid with precious stones and having small bunches of pearls hanging down. Tad was a hollow circle worn on the arm just below the Bazuband. Manucci describes, the Princess wore in their arms above the elbow, rich armlets two inches wide, enriched on the surface with stones and having small bunches of pearls hanging from them.

The Mughal ladies were also fond of wearing rings of various pattern and design on their fingers. The rings were studded with precious stones like diamonds and sapphires. On the right thumb there was always a ring where in a place of stone a little round mirror (arsi) having pearl around it, this is because as Manucci tells that the Mughal ladies were very fond of looking at themselves in these tiny mirrors quite often.[15]

Ear Ornaments – All women wore pierced earrings or pendants usually made of gold, silver or copper which hung down from the ears almost touching the shoulder. Bauli was worn in the upper part of the ear while kundala was for the lower part. The women also wear several small rings of gold or silver in holes bored around the rim of the ear. Abul Fazl

describes different type of earrings worn by the ladies like Kuntila, a tapering shaped earrings; Karnphul(ear flower(shaped like a flower of the Magrela; Pipal-patti, crescent- shaped, worn as a bunch of eight or nine in each ear; Champakali, smaller than the red rose, worn on the shell of the ear; and Mor-Bhanwar, which was a ear pendant shaped like a peacock. This ear ornaments are made in gold and silver set with diamonds; pendants of pearls, green glass and emeralds, strands of pearls and rubies. The considerable weight of these ornaments is only partly supported by the hook, which passes through the ear; the strands of pearls would be looped up and the twisted gold tie threaded into the hair. Some other earrings are gold with applied stamped motifs, gold wires and granulation. However, though these ear ornaments are very obviously stylized cobras or nagas, the upper projecting section is the head of a semi-abstract animal (bat) with long ears and fangs. It thus relates to the group of ear ornaments with bizarre animal and bird heads. Another shared feature is the use of geometric motifs. This pair would have been worn with five other ornaments on each ear by sudra women.[16]

Nose Ornaments - The fashion of nose ornamentation was brought in India probably by the Muslim invader from the North West. But the nose ornamentation became popular in Mughal Harem as known from the Persian miniature paintings. But its presence in the Mughal Harem is known from the various sources. Abul Fazl in his Ain-i-Akbari mentions nose ornaments like the Besar, which was a broad piece of gold to the upper ends of which a pearl was attached and at the other a golden wire which is clasped on to the pearl and hung from the nose by a gold wire.[17]

Moghul Jewellery for neck- Various necklaces mostly made of gold and silver and studded with gems and pearls were worn by the Mughal women. They are enamelled gold and silver pendant set with rubies, emeralds, natural white sapphires and rock crystal, strands of pearls and emerald with two rubies. Har was a necklace of strings of pearls interconnected by golden roses. The Mughal women also had three to five rows of pearls hanging from their neck coming down as far as the lower stomach. Round their neck they also had strings of pearls or precious stones and over these a valuable ornaments having in its centre a big diamond, a ruby, emerald or sapphire round it huge pearls. A few necklaces are full with enamelled gold plaques and pendants; some set with pendent pearls and green glass beads, whereas the strands of pearls terminate in emerald and ruby beads. Each of the large central pendants is enamelled with slightly different motifs using the same red, white and green palette, highlighted with touches of pale blue. The plaques, which secure the strings of pearls, are enamelled in an unusual combination of opaque yellow and white flowers with lime green leaves on a translucent ground. [18]

Pendants & Lockets - The pendant (taviz) with rubies and emeralds in gold is one of the feature of Mughals. The palmette at the centre relates to those found in the Iranian-influenced decorative arts of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, rather than to the period of Shah Jahan when floral decoration became more naturalistic. The detail is painstaking, with the eyes of the birds being minute emeralds set in gold. The back is inscribed with a Koranic verse. The amulet, which is bored along the top edge, would have been the central pendant to a necklace. [19]

Pendants are also enamelled gold, set with rubies and a diamond on the front, and with green glass imitating emeralds. These pendants, with their carefully shaped, flat-set rubies, and green glass imitating emeralds, are worked in a style, which goes back to the late 16th century. The gemstones are used almost like mosaics, set into chased depressions and separated by gold left in slight relief to delineate the pattern. The residual areas are then engraved with flowers and foliage. The back is beautifully enamelled in a rhythmic portrayal of a bird amongst flowers, using the standard Moghul palette of white, red and green, though with touches of opaque yellow and blue.

The lockets are the enamelled gold set with diamonds. Each locket has a rose-cut diamond at its centre, the other stones being roughly faceted and a rather unusual feature in Indian jewellery where small diamonds are, typically, flat-cut. The larger of the two lockets has translucent blue at the front, the smaller and a rather pale translucent green. The backs have similar motifs of red, green and blue birds and flowers on a white ground, on the larger contained within a quatrefoil frame and on the smaller within an oval. [20]

Mughal Turban Ornaments

Only the emperor himself, his intimate relations, and select members of his entourage (beasts as well as men) were permitted to wear a royal turban ornament. As the empire matured, differing styles of ornament acquired the generic name of sarpech, from sar or sir, meaning head, and pech, meaning fastener. Initially, however, in Akbar's time, the principal turban ornament appears to have been the kalgi, a relatively simple gold or jewelled stem of Turco-Persian origin, into which was inserted a plume of feathers. Ideally, the feathers were those of a heron. Royal portraits from Jahangir's reign show a more elaborate style of noteworthy gems clustered at the base of the plume and with a pendent pearl encouraging a gentle droop from the plume itself. During Shah Jahan's reign an entirely mineralogical version of the kalgi appeared- an ornate, heavily jewelled brooch, in which a stylized 'plume' as well as the stem was composed of gems set in gold and backed by polychrome enamel. Even when solid, however, the 'plume' often affected the droop of Jahangir,s kalgi and was adorned by one or more pendent stones. In this form the turban ornament was known as a jigha, although it is important to note that most jighas retained a stem (tana) at the back for the insertion of the original feathered plume. In a more elaborate form still, the jigha acquired a wide jewelled base, a sarpatti, of three, five, or seven panels which was secured to the turban by silken or jewelled ties. Sarpattis of five or seven sections often sported three or five jighas respectively.

There is a considerable debate about the origins of these new designs. Susan Stronge has argued that the development of the Mughals jigha owed something to the influence of the jewelled hat aigrettes of sixteenth and early seventeenth-century Europe. Illustrations of these would have been available to the emperors and their goldsmiths in the portraits of their sovereign and patrons that European visitors presented at court. Recently Oppi Untracht has counterd that it may have been the European who derived their aigrettes from India, nothing that portraits of nobles travelled in both directions and that the European took some time to replace the turban-friendly stem of the kalgi with a pin that was more suited to European hats. At the very least, the debate serves to high light the interchange of artistic

ideas between vibrant cultures. It is certain that European noticed both the ornaments and the symbolism of kingship they radiated. In the 1660s, Francois Berneir (1620-88), a French physician who reside at the court of Aurangzeb, witnessed a state occasion in which the emperor's sarpech dazzled: 'A turban, of gold cloth, had an aigrette whose base was composed of diamonds of an extra ordinary size and value, beside an oriental topaz, which may be pronounced unparalleled, exhibiting a lustre like the sun,' another French traveller, Jean de Thevenot (1633-67), observed that in Golconda the local sultan had expanded turban ornamentation to prodigious- even grotesque-dimensions.

A turban jewel (Jigha and Sarpati) is an enameled gold set with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, a sapphire, and a pendent pearl and was found in Bengal (Murshidabad) and these jewels were presented to Admiral Charles Watson by the Nawab of Bengal on 26 July 1757, following the battle of Plassey.The jewels are typical of the Murshidabad court fashion at the time. A painting of caliverdi Khan of century 1750-55 shows the Nawab with his young grandson Siraj-ud-Daula; both wear turban jewels of exactly the same form. [21]

Mughal Zenanas – Indian women's fascination and deep liking for ornaments were in no way less during the Mughals age. Various contemporary sources, accounts of foreign travellers and Mughal paintings reveal the fact that the Mughal ladies loaded themselves with a large variety of ornaments. Most of the traveller agree that ornaments were "the very joy of their hearts". Each Princess had her own private collection of gems and they rivalled each other in brilliance. Often they would wear pearls in great profusion, covering their wrists, chests, and ankles. Jewellers were constantly being commissioned by members of the royal household to produce gold ornaments and to mount pearls in the form of the moon, a crescent, or a star, as well as making special items of other gems. It has been noted by some historians that there has been mention of trays filled with rubies which had only been polished and roughly shaped in the form of fruit, then pierced and hung from a gold string. Each princess had several sets of precious stones, to match their various dresses. They changed four or five times a day, according to the ceremonies of the court. The Mughals ladies had no difficulty in affording these costly ornaments because of their rich allowances, personal sources of income and gifts they got from the emperors and from others. According to Manucci, all these princesses owned six to eight sets of jewels in addition to others worn according to their fancy.[22]

Liaisons with jewellery in India are matchless in the world. It is a seamless tradition of personal embellishment spanning over five thousand years in this country. From simple floral garlands to the coruscating brilliance of creations in pure gold laden with gems, India has spawned a prodigious range of jewels, each replete with symbols and meaning appropriate to the status and beliefs of its wearer. So intricately has the art of jewellery been woven into the fabric of Indian life that the unrestrained history of the Indian subcontinent itself is reflected in the story of its jewels.

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