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### IMPRESSUM

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Tel. (030) 8301-361, Fax (030) 8301-502, E-mail: [mik@smb.spk-berlin.de](mailto:mik@smb.spk-berlin.de)

*Umschlagabbildung: Jina Rṣabhanātha, Messing mit Einlage, Gujarat, 8. Jh. n.Chr., H: 18,8 cm, MIK I 10146. Foto: Iris Papadopoulos*

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# The British King as Successor to the Mughal Emperor in a Photograph presumably by Theodor Julius Hoffmann

Joachim K. Bautze

The Mughal emperor Akbar (r.1556-1605) re-introduced an originally Rajput custom known as *jharoka-i-darshan*. During this ceremony, the emperor appeared at a certain window (*jharoka* in Persian, *jharokha* in Hindi: window, casement, loophole) of his palace in order to show himself to the public (*darśan*: seeing, show, view, appearance) for an hour or more. This custom was apparently followed by all Mughal emperors, especially since the interruption of this daily ritual could result in the loss of the throne: “After sunrise he appeared in the *jharoka* (balcony) for the *darshan* (audience), which provided an opportunity for the common people to see the emperor and to present their complaints directly to him. It made the king accessible to the people. He watched sometimes from the *jharoka* elephant fights and other entertainments.”<sup>1)</sup> Occasionally, a royal artist was present when the emperor made his appearance in the *jharoka* and left a pictorial account.<sup>2)</sup>

Not later than 1857, the year of the “Mutiny” or “First War of Independence”, this daily custom was no longer followed in the then Mughal capital, Shahjahanabad or Delhi. Two hundred years earlier we learn about the then emperor Shah Jahan (r.1628-58): “After one week, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Zi’l-Hijja (24 September, 1657), he had sufficiently recovered to appear at the *jharoka* window of the royal sleeping chamber in the Fort at Shahjahanabad, in order to reassure the populace who had become greatly disturbed by his absence.”<sup>3)</sup>

The *jharoka* in Delhi is part of the “Golden” or “Octagonal Tower” which is the only “projecting engaged octagonal tower [of the so-called Red Fort] off the east side that overlooks the river [i.e. the Yamuna, indicated by “Jh” in Fig. 5]”.<sup>4)</sup> Probably the earliest Western account of this tower is by François BERNIER (1625-88), who, when describing the palace of Delhi in a letter to François de la Mothe Le Vayer (1588-1672) wrote from there on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1663: “Within the walls of this enchanting place, in fine, no oppressive or inconvenient heat is felt. The eunuchs speak with extravagant praise of a small tower, facing the river, which is covered with plates of gold, in the same manner as the two towers at *Agra*; and its apartments are decorated with gold and azure exquisite paintings and magnificent mirrors” (BERNIER 1916: 267f.). In a description published originally in 1846 we read: “It is built of white marble which has been profusely painted and gilded. Its cupola and *kalaśa* too have been gilded, hence it is also called *Sunehri Burj*. Its three sides face the *Khawābgāh* and five project towards the river, with marble *jalis*.”<sup>5)</sup> A few years earlier, a painting by an Indian artist showing this tower, is described by the then Agent of Delhi, Sir Thomas Theophilus METCALFE (1795-1853): “The *Summun Boorj* or *Octagon Tower* in the Centre, a very favorite apartment of the present King and in which all interviews with the Agent of a strictly Private Nature are held” (1843: 79).

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1) Cf. KHAN 1976: 41-44, fully annotated.

2) See the following examples for *Agra*: GALLOWAY/SPINK 1980: 49f., # 72; SANDERSON/HASAN 1914: 92f., pl. XXXVIII; SOTHEYB’S 1989: front cover, lot 63, just to mention a few.

3) ’INĀYAT KHĀN 1990: 543. MATHUR 1964: 15 & 32. NICHOLSON 1989: 91.

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4) ASHER 1992: 198. For detailed ground plans cf. LA ROCHE 1921: 206, Abb. 318, or REUTHER 1925: pl. 60 and p. 54 for a description. For an interior view see VOLWAHSEN 1969: pl. 120.

5) NATH 1979: 15 under “*Burj Tilā* (Golden *Burj*) or the *Muthamman Burj* – (The Octagonal Tower). “*Sunehri Burj*” means “Golden Tower” as well. FANSHAWE 1902: 38. Cf. also JAIN n.d.: 15.



*Fig. 1*  
*Three-quarter length portrait of*  
*Bahadur Shah II (1775-1862),*  
*Emperor of Delhi 1837-57,*  
*photographed by*  
*R.C. Tytler and Charles Shepherd*  
*on May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1858.*  
*Flush mounted albumen print,*  
*titled on the mount beneath the*  
*photograph in a period hand:*  
*"King of Delhi".*  
*Size: 10.4 x 13.8 cm.*  
*Private Collection*

The “present King” as mentioned by METCALFE, was Abu Zafar Sirajuddin Muhammad Bahadur Shah Zafar (1775-1862), the last Mughal ruler. As he was considered to be one of the leaders of the “Mutiny”, he was, following a show trial that ended on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 1859, exiled to Rangoon in Burma, then part of the British empire. At the beginning of the trial, Bahadur Shah was successfully photographed by Robert Christopher Tytler (1818-72) and Charles Shepherd on May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1858 (**Fig. 1**) as becomes apparent from the diary of the king’s jailor, Lieutenant Edward Ommanney.<sup>6)</sup> This is the only existing photograph of the king of Delhi in the line of the Mughal emperors, a broken old man lying on a bed enjoying a simple *hookah*.

The king was exiled – and what happened to his “very favorite apartment”? In November 1857 or more likely prior to his visit to Europe in that year it was photographed by Dr. John Murray (1809-98). Next to a large-sized view (**Fig. 2**), he took at least two stereographs, one of which survived only as “half-stereograph” (**Fig. 3**).<sup>7)</sup>

6) Cf. DALRYMPLE 2006, text and photograph opposite p. 421. This is the photographer Charles Shepherd who later became the partner of Samuel Bourne (1834-1912).

7) The “complete” stereograph was part of lot 18 sold at SOTHEBY’S London on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1999, as part of the sale *Early Photographs of India. The Archive of John Murray*. For four published Delhi views from this lot see GADEBUSCH/BAUTZE 2008: 60.

The damage to the cupola caused evidently by cannonballs is not necessarily the result of British bombardment. Delhi had seen lots of fighting before 1857. In the light of F. Beato’s (1832-1909) view of the same monument, taken in 1858 or 1859 at the latest, the early dating for Murray’s photographs is evident: Beato’s photograph no longer shows the dome apparent in all photographs taken before 1858.<sup>8)</sup>

In course of time the earlier precious cupola was replaced “by a dome, which was once cased in copper-gilt, and is now covered with lime plaster” writes Carr STEPHEN (1876: 236).<sup>9)</sup> Gordon HEARN’s claim (1906: 158), that there is (in 1906) “now a marble dome, which has replaced one of copper-gilt”, must be refuted. HEARN might have confounded the dome of the tower with the cupolas of the nearby Moti Masjid, indicated here by “M” in **Fig. 5**, on which “Marble domes wholly disproportionate particularly in respect of their finials to the size of the mosque were erected after the mutiny in place of the original domes covered with gilded copper, which had shared the same fate as that which covered the dome of the Musamman Burj and the *chattris* of the Diwān-i-*khāss* [marked with a “D” in **Fig. 5**]” (SANDERSON 1915: 13). It has also been rightly remarked that the “original

8) MASSELOS/GUPTA 2000: 69, full page illustration.

9) Cf. also SANDERSON 1937: 39, “... roofed by a dome, once cased in gilded copper and now covered with lime plaster.”



Fig. 2 Albumen print from a waxed paper negative by John Murray, MD, 1857 or earlier. Imprinted on the mount below: "Mussum Boorj And Dewan Khass Of The / Palace, Delhi, / Printed at the School of Industrial Art, Calcutta, / from a Negative by / Dr. Murray, / Civil Surgeon, Agra." Size: 32.6 x 44.4 cm; mount: 45.5 x 57.3 cm. Private Collection

dome [of the Musamman Burj] was of different section" (HASAN/SANDERSON 1916: 18). Significantly, one famous writer of "handbooks" on various northern Indian cities, Henry George KEENE, when describing the monument (1906: 135), does not mention the fake dome at all.

Why were these monuments mutilated and when were they later on wrongly reconstructed? Since the Diwan-i-Khass, the Imperial hall of private audiences of the palace, situated immediately to the north of the Musamman Burj, soon became the head-quarter of the British army following the recapture of the city (MEDLEY 1858: 119), it is not surprising that the buildings were stripped off their valuable materials. The soldiers who participated in the recapture of Delhi were promised some kind of prize money, which, however, they probably never received (see the detailed description in IRELAND 1861: 276ff.). This prize money was initially collected from auctions during which movable spoils of any value were sold. Thus we read again about the domes of the Moti



Fig. 3 Albumen print from a waxed paper negative, "half stereograph" by John Murray, MD, 1857 or earlier. Size: 7.2 x 7.7 cm. Private Collection



Fig. 4 Unmounted albumen print numbered and titled on the back, in pencil: “3107 / Delhi / the Palace”. Frith-Studio, about 1865/66. Size: 15.4 x 20.5 cm. Private Collection

Masjid or pearl mosque: “The marble domes look heavy, but they have replaced domes of copper gilt, which were sold by auction for a mere song, after the siege in 1857. A similar fate befell the dome over the Octagon Tower and the small domes on the Diwān Khās, all of which were of gilded copper plates.”<sup>10)</sup>

Beato’s photo of the Musamman Burj<sup>11)</sup> shows that the removal of the dome must have happened by 1858. That the domes of the Moti Masjid were not in place in 1864/65 is demonstrated by Samuel Bourne’s photograph

taken in that season.<sup>12)</sup> Frith’s photo of the [Indian] Universal series, no. 3106 (“Delhi; the Palace – Motee Musjid [Pearl Mosque]”),<sup>13)</sup> taken a year later, shows the [new] domes in place. The following photo in Frith’s photo list, no. 3107, illustrates “Delhi; the palace, from the river” (Fig. 4). The dome on the Musamman Burj, in the left hand half of the picture, shines bright and clean. The other significant architectural changes visible in the photos taken in or before 1857 and those taken in or after 1866 were discussed earlier (see NICHOLLS 1909).

10) HEARN 1906: 14. The same passage is quoted *verbatim* in RENTON-DENNING 1911: 57, where, however, the original author is not mentioned at all.

11) Probably no. 28, “Seenmura Boorg Palace” of the Delhi views in HERING 1862.

12) Bourne 1351: “The Palace, the Motee Musjid (Pearl Mosque)”. For an early reproduction, see WHEELER 1877, mounted Woodbury type facing p. 40.

13) Frith’s lists of Indian photo pictures is published in RAYNER (forthcoming).

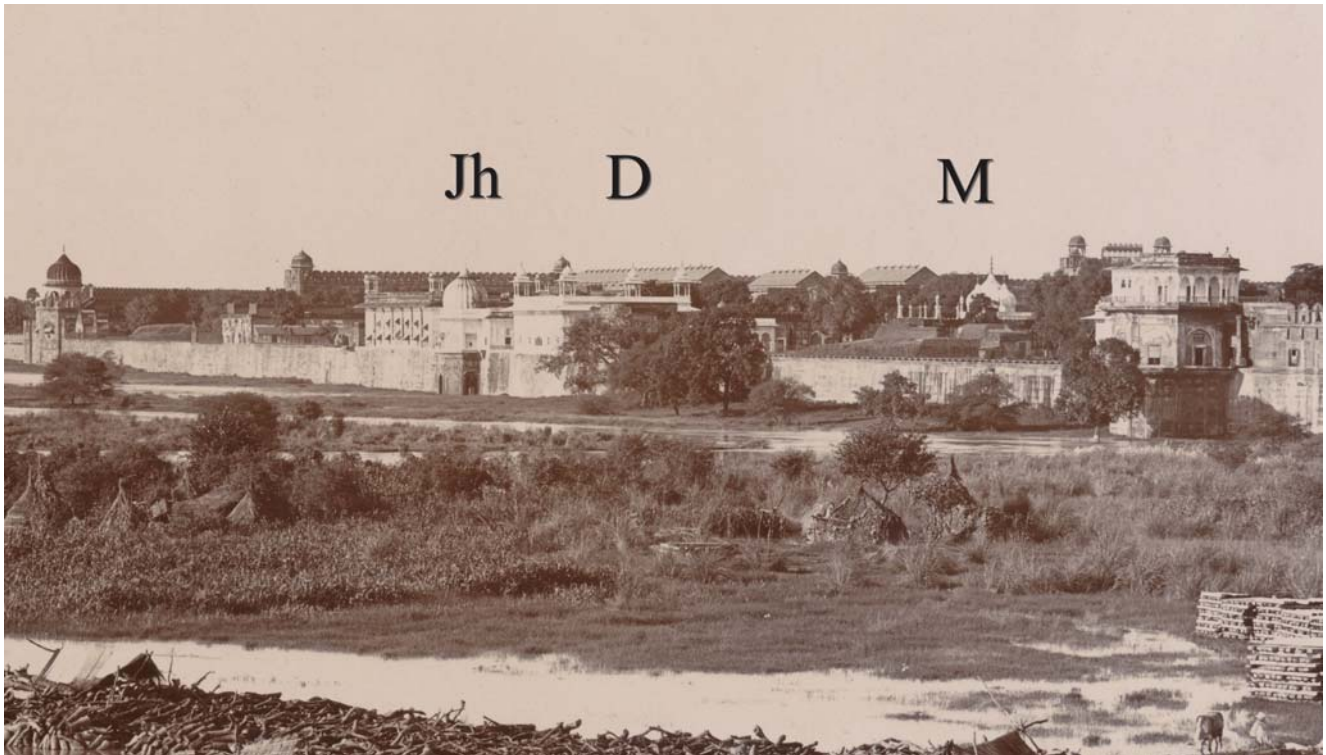


Fig. 5 Glossy silver gelatine print from an album titled “Photos of India”. Inscribed on the mount below: “Fort and Palace[,] Delhi”. About 1900 or earlier. Size of the full view: 14.2 x 20.5 cm. Private Collection

Jh = Jharoka; D = Diwān-i-Khāss; M = Moti Masjid

A detail from a photo taken by an anonymous photographer (**Fig. 5**) illustrates the situation towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Remarkable is the proximity of the river, which during the rainy season must have washed the eastern wall of the palace.

#### The one-time revival of the *jharoka-i-darshan*

On November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1910, His Imperial Majesty the King Emperor, i.e. George Frederick Ernest Albert (“George V”) of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions, Emperor of India (r. 1910-36) officially decided to visit India in company of the queen consort of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions, Empress of India, usually mentioned as “Queen Empress”. It was the first (and last) time during the British control of the subcontinent that an “Emperor of India” actually decided to visit the home of the majority of his citizens. George V was Emperor of India not because he was of Indian lineage or was elected into this position by the peoples of India. He assumed the title from his father and predecessor, Edward VII (r. 1901-10), who in turn inherited the title from his mother, Queen Victoria (r. 1837-1901), who

was termed “Empress of India” on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1876, following the formal incorporation of India into the British Empire.

This visit, which lasted from December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1911 to January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1912, was, from the very start, marked by Imperial Mughal elements such as architectural features, ceremonies or designations. Already the original “Gateway of India”, built to receive the Emperor of India at Apollo Bunder, Bombay, looked more like the Taj Mahal than anything else.<sup>14)</sup> The highlight of the Imperial visit was the “Coronation Durbar” at Delhi – as it was officially called – and the mere word “Durbar” (Persian: *darbār*, a royal court) for this pageant, receptions and grand spectacle is of a more Mughal origin (PARODI 2010).

The climax of the “Durbar” was probably “The Darshan”, as it was called in one of the more detailed

<sup>14)</sup> It should be remembered that, when George V landed there, the original gateway looked totally different from what it looks ever since its formal opening on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 1924. For a reproduction of the original gateway see the photograph by Bourne & Shepherd in REED 1912: 33; *Times of India* 1911: 7; also GABRIEL/LUARD 1914: 35ff., ch. “The Gateway of India”.

contemporary reports.<sup>15)</sup> It took place on December 13<sup>th</sup>, the day after the “Durbar”,<sup>16)</sup> at about 4:30 p.m., and was announced in the “official programme” which also served as an illustrated guide to Delhi, together with the description of the building under consideration as follows: “Musamman Burj, or Octagonal Tower. Projecting from the latter is a balcony, on which the Moghal Emperors used to show themselves to the multitude below on the ‘Bela.’<sup>17)</sup> This ancient custom Their Imperial Majesties the King-Emperor and Queen-Empress intend to revive by appearing before their subjects ...”.<sup>18)</sup> This passage of the program alone may serve to illustrate that senior directors from the Archaeological Survey of India were in all probability not consulted. The “Moghal Emperors” did certainly not “show themselves” from this balcony as part of an “ancient custom” because it is a comparably recent construction added in 1808-09 by Bahadur Shah’s II predecessor Abu’l Nasir Mu’in ad-Din Muhammad Akbar II (r. 1806-37).<sup>19)</sup>

A description of this event was published shortly afterwards: “The sun was low in the sky when Their Imperial Majesties came out of the Diwan-i-Khas, wearing their Coronation robes and crowns, to the famous octagonal tower. As they performed this ceremony which is called the *Darshan*, one could from the wall see a ripple of excitement ...”.<sup>20)</sup>

“Then in the projecting balcony of the Saman Burj, in the very spot where the Moghuls down to the time of Aurangzebe were wont to grant the *darshan*, the ceremony of showing themselves to the people, appeared the King Emperor clad in flowing robes with the Imperial crown of flashing gems and beside him the regal figure of

the Queen Empress, her Coronation robes sweeping from her shoulders, her aureole of hair crowned by a diadem, the personification of Imperial womanhood.”<sup>21)</sup>

The official report informs: “His Majesty was wearing the undress uniform of a Field Marshal, but in the small apartments of the Tasbih Khana, Their Majesties assumed their Imperial robes, the King-Emperor wearing his crown and the Queen-Empress a circlet of diamonds. Advancing then, shortly before half-past four, to the *Jharoka*, the balcony window in the bastion known as the Mussaman Burj, which had been similarly used by the Moghul Emperors Their Majesties stood for a time in the full view of the people. Their appearance was unheralded by any form of salute, but the people had been anxiously waiting it and the eyes of all were strained towards the Burj. Directly Their Majesties were seen, a mighty roar of recognition arose, spreading like a wave with inconceivable rapidity for a whole mile across the plain, and lasting as long Their Majesties remained there at the window.”<sup>22)</sup>

All three reports are illustrated by a photographic print obtained from the same glass plate. In each case, the studio of “Johnston & Hoffmann” is credited.<sup>23)</sup> Since this studio was founded in Calcutta about the late 1870s by P.A. Johnston (died 1891) and Theodor Julius Hoffmann (c. 1855-1921), it must be assumed that the latter is responsible for this important view.<sup>24)</sup> All three published photographic illustrations, however, concentrate on the Royal couple alone, the tower as such remains out of sight. Probably the cheap, moldy, dirty looking dome above Their Imperial Highnesses (**Fig. 6**), prevented the wider circulation of this image. Local people might have told their grandchildren that the dome above the Musamman Burj once sparkled in the light of the rising sun, until the soldiers commanded by British officers replaced the golden dome with plaster in a shape that has almost nothing in common with the original structure built between 1639 and 1648.

15) REED 1912: 167ff. In the official program the event is called “Garden Party”, cf. *Coronation Durbar* 1911: 57: “They [Their Imperial Majesties] have consented to present themselves at the historic *Jarokha* [sic] in the Masumum [sic] Burj to the crowds assembled for the Badshahi Mela ...”.

16) During which King George V made, like Shah Jahan before him in 1639, Delhi the new capital of India: “We have decided upon the transfer of the seat of the Government of India from Calcutta to the ancient capital of Delhi [...]”; REED 1912: 164.

17) The actual text does not explain this word. Probably *belā*, (Hindi, n. mas.: riverbank) was meant.

18) *Official Programme* 1911: 16-19. All 16 illustrations in this publication are original tipped-in photographs by Johnston & Hoffmann.

19) HASAN/SANDERSON 1916: 18f., serial no. 19. Balcony.

20) *Times of India* 1911, unpaginated section.

21) REED 1912: 176. That “Aurangzebe” (r. 1658-1707) cannot have stood in the “projecting balcony” was explained earlier.

22) GABRIEL/LUARD 1914: 188.

23) *Times of India* 1911, unpaginated section, titled: “In the Masunum [sic] Burj.” REED 1912: 173, “The King and Queen in the Saman Burj.” GABRIEL/LUARD 1914, illustration opposite p. 184: “The Darshan.”

24) For this information I am indebted to Hugh Ashley Rayner, Bath.





*Fig. 6 King George V and the Queen-Emress during the jharoka-i-darshan. Silver gelatine print by Johnston & Hoffmann, photographed on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 1911, shortly after 4:30 p.m. Size: 26.5 x 24.5 cm. Private Collection*

When describing the Mussaman Burj, recent guides published by the Archaeological Survey of India still mention: “It was from this balcony that King George V

and Queen Mary appeared before the public in 1911.” (SHARMA 1990: 153). The original decoration and shape of the monument, however, seems to be forgotten.

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