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Cards

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## **From Courtly Craze to Coasters: A Catastrophic Chronicle of *Ganjifa* Cards**

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It will be a genuine case of shame if we remain mere spectators while great belongings of cultural heritage gradually go the way of extinction. In truth, they never die—neither should they. A long-established pastime is not just some instrument of spending the idle hours; they are in actual fact an affluent and legitimate appearance of culture and ethnicity. *Ganjifa* cards are a kind corresponding to this trend. They are the conventional playing cards of Central and South Asia whose history is wearing a veil of haze.





It is assumed to have had its foundation in India a thousand years back, acknowledged in Sanskrit literatures as **Krida-patram**, meaning “painted rags for playing”. However in the midst of Persian and Arabic influence, the amusement came to be celebrated as *Ganjifa*. Dr. Pramila Lochan states: “*Ganj* is a Persian word meaning treasure and though the derivation is not completely established, what remains intriguing is that there is always one money suit named after a coin of local currency.” Connoting wealth or money and playing for wager, it turned out to be a beloved leisure amid the elite class; and later among the mass. This game thrived as a regal craze all through the medieval period, patronized by the royal courts of both Persia and India. The first significant *Mughal* emperor of India, Babur and his daughter were connoisseurs of the game, as opinions of some historians propose.

*Ganjifa* playing cards are spherical or rectangular, and magnificently hand-painted with traditional natural dye on cardboard sheets. As calendars advance, this time-honoured arty game rushes toward a wretched decease. We now need to follow a line of investigation in order to comprehend the world of *Ganjifa* cards—to classify and realize the rationale behind the alteration and therefore afford apt propositions to revitalize this artistic game in today’s context. To understand the art behind the creation of these cards, we need to go through the experiences shared by *Ganjifa* artists, and organize a meeting platform (pun intended) where enthusiasts from around the world can congregate to discuss about the possible ways of its rejuvenation and perpetuation. Seeing that there remains only a handful of families in India who can still recreate such a charm of fine art, it is the need of the hour to have a massive movement for this extinct art-genre.



### ***Behind the Game and Extinction***

The chief aspire of the game was to edify, study and tell stories from our ancient scriptures and Vedic literatures. Style was set to stories from the Hindu *Puranas*, legends from the *Ramayana*, episodes from *Mahabharata* and a variety of other scriptures. In Indian provinces of Maharashtra and Odisha, *Ganjifa* was an extensive pastime typically found among the Brahmin sect. Old people can still be located playing *Dashavatara Ganjifa* near the celebrated Puri Temples of Odisha, primarily with 16-suited 192 card decks. A later Brahmin validation of this pursuit was a belief that the performance of the game is gratifying to the Almighty. Some eminent religious thinkers of 19<sup>th</sup> century opined that by playing the game and thus knowing God Vishnu's incarnations, sins get washed away. A king of Bengal is assumed to have got these playing cards prepared even in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Another resurgence of these playing cards was instigated in the 16<sup>th</sup> century whilst *Mughals* ruled over India. In due course the Hinduization of themes greatly contributed to the spread and popularity of the game developing into several versions—*Dashavatar* (based on Vishnu's 10 incarnations), *Navagraha* (based on the nine planets), **Ashtadikpala** which refers to the eight cardinal directions, *Ramayana* which refers to armies of *Rama* and *Ravana*, and others that might have been lost into oblivion.

According to Dr. Lochan: "In June 1527 Babar, the first *Mughal* ruler sent *Ganjifa* cards to his friend in Sindh. By the 16th century several different types of *Ganjifa* games had developed in India. The *Ain-i-Akbari* gives details of cards and suit signs, described by Abul Fazl (Akbar's biographer). Akbar invented the present game of *Mughal Ganjifa*. The names of the eight suits of 96 *Mughal Ganjifa* widely known today are; *Taj*, *Safed*, *Samsher*,





*Ghulam, Chang, Surkh, Barat and Qimash.*” She also informs: “In *Mughal Ganjifa*, the two suits *Safed* and *Surkh* represented money.” The names acquaint us with the explanation why the sport might have been christened *Ganjifa* or ‘treasure-oriented’: *ghulam* (servant), *taj* (crown), *shamsher* (sword), *ashrafi* (gold coin), *chang* (harp), *barat* (document), *tanka* (silver coin), and *qimash* (merchandise). These cards were literally and physically of a kingly nature: made of precious materials like ivory or tortoise shell, bedecked with jewels every so often, and gracefully decorated (**Fig. 1**). Pooja Ratnakar (as cited in Krishna, 2015) reflects: “The iconography of *Ganjifa* has obvious associations with symbols of governance and court politics of that time, something... fascinating to discover”.



**Fig.1. Mughal Ganjifa [Courtesy: Traveholic]**



The cards in use at the level of the commoners were made of humbler materials—wood or paper; and not embellished, except with paintings. In common man's use the cards were circular in shape, as opposed to the rectangular ones most in vogue at the courtly level. The set frequently used by the majority was the *Dashavatara*, and consisted of 120 cards distributed in 10 suits. While the 'court card' had on it the image of one of the incarnations, the numbered cards would bear icons allied with that specific manifestation—a set of pictures with fishes, boar and so on.

With the arrival of *French sets*—as they were called, consisting of 52 cards and everything in printed form—however, almost as a final fling of the stake, the architects of *Ganjifa* cards altered their itinerary (**Fig. 2**). They began making sets that figured traditional images but also putting them on suits that featured—following western modes—spades, hearts, diamonds and clubs. Thus the game had been turned on its head, as it were, before dying out.



**Fig.2. MughalGanjifa under Western influence [Courtesy: the Madras Designery]**



### ***We Lost, They Found***

It was more than 60 years ago that Rudolf von Leyden — Austria-born, Mumbai-based scholar, artist and art critic — wrote an article on *Ganjifa*, in an early issue of the *Marg* magazine. Rudolf von Leyden made his ways to India as a geologist. Tracking his creative penchant he set up the *Leyden Commercial Art Studio* and remained occupied in Indian enterprises for 40 years. His assortment of *Ganjifa* cards still dazzles in the *Deutsches Spielkarten Museum* at Leinfelden near Stuttgart, Germany: a museum exclusively devoted to playing cards from all over the planet.

These days, the foremost hub of *Ganjifa* manufacture are Sawantwadi in Maharashtra, Bishnupur in Bengal, Mysore in Karnataka, Puri, Sonepur, Parlakhemundi, Barapalli, Chikiti and Jaipur in Odisha, Sawai Madhopur and Karauli in Rajasthan, Sheopur in Madhya Pradesh, Fatehpur District in Uttar Pradesh, Balkonda, Nirmal, Bimgal, Kurnool, Nossam, Cuddapah and Kondapalle in Andhra Pradesh, and Bhaktapur, Bhadbaon and Patan in adjacent Nepal. *Mughal Ganjifa* is variously known as *Chang kanchan* in Sawantwadi, *Chang rani* in Nirmal, *Navgunjara* or *athrangi sara* in Orissa. Nowadays these wonderful cards grace the galleries of London's *Victoria and Albert Museum*, *Museum for Volkerkunde* in Vienna, and the aforesaid *Deutsches Spielkarten Museum*—evidently resulting from the toils of genuine enthusiasts. But in their own country, they are now under severe negligence that has stretched over decades; till date only a handful of measures have been made to rejuvenate this arty exegesis.





### *Foujdars in Bengal*

In West Bengal, the sole torch-bearers of *Ganjifa Dashavatar* art, the Foujdar family of Bishnupur in Bankura district, are finding it ‘easier said than done’ to maintain the convention, owing to pecuniary constriction. The card game was initiated in Bengal at some stage in the sovereignty of Malla King Veer Hambir who ruled Bishnupur from 1587 to 1622. Prabhat Kumar Saha, a specialist on *Dashavatar* cards, pointed out (as cited in Das, 2015): “Malla dynasty ruled from about 12<sup>th</sup> Century AD to 1622”; and though these cards hold a long history back, Mr. Saha painfully remarked: “people rarely buy these cards. The advent of Western card games in the era of the East India Company significantly contributed to the decline of popularity of these cards”.

The Foujdar folk who assert to be in the vocation for 87 generations, nonetheless, are finding it thorny to continue the trade of manufacturing *Dashavatar* cards, as the trade is not money-spinning to any further extent (**Fig. 3**). Sital Foujdar, a member of the family sadly opined (as cited in Das, 2015): “The income is very irregular and [we are] totally dependent of tourists. At best we earn about Rs.10, 000 per month, which is grossly inadequate for a family of 16 people. It may not be possible for us to keep this tradition alive for very long,”



**Fig.3. Painting Dashavatara Ganjifa [Courtesy: the Hindu]**





Mr. Foujdar also stated “at best only one card can be made per day” citing the cause that raw resources like an assortment of adhesives extracted from plants and fabric employed in the creation of the cards coerce its cost aloft. “The price starts at Rs.1000 for a set consisting of 10 cards. The sets of 120 cards (10 suits of 12 cards each) might cost from Rs.8,000 to Rs.15,000”.

### ***The Mysore Masters***

Krishnaraja Wodeyar III of Mysore (1794-1868), a practiced *Ganjifa* player, rejuvenated this aged pastime (**Fig. 4**). After a century and a quarter of it, Raghupathi Bhatta, the son of a chief chef at the *Udupi* Sri Krishna Matha, set up the *International Ganjifa Research Centre* at Mysore in 1993. Stimulated by the *Ganjifa* cards he procured from the adjacent palace in the mid-1970s, he gained knowledge of the craft from a habitual practitioner at adjacent Nagamangala. These days, his nephew Gurupada H. is fundamental to the recent workshop (one of over 500 aficionados taught by Bhatta), who sharpen up the procedure of crafting cards of handmade paper to illustrate splendid portraits of royal figures, their astute comrades, divinities in numerous avatars, or convoluted natural elements. Bhatta has demonstrated this superior paintings at London’s *Victoria and Albert Museum* and his works are also ingredient of a permanent display there—a manifestation to his timely credit as a *Ganjifa* revival artist. He, in addition, has more than a few medals to his name together with a *President’s Award* in 1993 and the *Lalit Kala Akademi Award* in 1996 for his pioneering work in this field. As a part of his pursuit to perk up and popularize this antique convention of minuscule painting, ‘*Ganjifa Shri*’ Bhatta used to exhibit his work in a museum in Srirangapatana. After this was closed down, the artist shifted his machinery to a



minor museum and studio in Mysore.



**Fig.4. Mysore Ganjifa [Courtesy: Go UNESCO]**

In the year 2000, this small scale venture saw alike fate, attributable to lack of any support, economic or else, from the Government and clientele—not a factor to renounce his cause anyway. Therefore, a hefty numeral of miniature paintings and the man himself can still be found following a focused study and attempted revival of *Ganjifa* that stretches for two decades now.

Late Ramanarasaiah was the palace-artist and later, the curator of *Jayachamarajendra Art Gallery* at Mysore, whose daughter Chandrika, has turned out to be another outstanding *Ganjifa* artist living in Mysore. Having been open to the elements of this craft right from her upbringing, she has learnt all the nuances of *Ganjifa*. Sudha Venkatesh, her sister, is also adept at creating *Ganjifa* cards. There are many workshops that teach this art but the learning process ends there. “The learners’ tryst with *Ganjifa* ends with what they learn in few days of



workshop,” Chandrika lamented (as cited in Shimladka, 2015): “*Ganjifa* cards are used as memorabilia today. People take one-off pieces instead of the entire series”.

Mysore *Ganjifa* was accorded with a GI (Geographical Indication) tag, identifying the sophistication of it; but with the plunge of royal management and administration, the game and art form started to slip into forgetfulness. As Ramadas Adyanthaya, a retired artist of *Chamarajendra Academy of Visual Arts* rightly reflected (as cited in Shimladka, 2015): “The cards used by royal families and aristocrats for games have now turned into mere wall showpieces. Nobody knows how to play *Ganjifa* games anymore.”

Girija is another artist from the metropolis who finds it irresistible painting *Ganjifa* cards. “People sometimes ask me to make *Ganjifa* art as memorabilia for marriages and other such social functions. Mounted cards are given as souvenirs these days,” she articulated (as cited in Shimladka, 2015). She also threw light on the tribulations allied with the collapse: “With growing age, making *Ganjifa* cards gets difficult. It puts high pressure on your eyes and even if you go wrong in one line, the whole has to be discarded.” Another reasonable argument is: “people underestimate its value and hesitate to pay,” as artist Veena, who makes *Ganjifa* cards on demand, annoyingly suggested (as cited in Shimladka, 2015).

### ***Rani of Sawantwadi***

*Ganjifa* card boxes on a ledge at Sawantwadi, cuddle the chronicle of a queen who received an alcoholic artisan as her tutor. Rani Satvashiladevi Bhonsle of Sawantwadi (Fig. 5) has become a mere bystander of the obliteration of sizeable regal designations and the dawdling downfall of *Ganjifa* art over the past decades.



**Fig.5. Rani of Sawantwadi [Courtesy:Kokan Search]**

Chitaris, a group of local artisans who bloomed underneath imperial benefaction, were thus left unaided and moved towards trouble-free currency that selling timber-made objet d'art fetched in.

In 1970, the noble family spotted 80-year-old Pundalik Chitari who contained a soul for woodcraft. From Pundalik they developed the *Ganjifa* art—cards prepared from cartilage paper with the *Dashavatara* decorated on them. “The market was dead, and they barely managed to sell one pack a year, for a measly Rs 30. There was just one master craftsman left, an alcoholic. My husband Lt. Col Rajabahadur Shivram Sawant Bhonsle and I learned the craft from him over two years, and went on to teach it to three more artisans,” memorized (as cited in Das, 2009) the old but gorgeous lady. *Ganjifa* got a shot in the arm as soon as the royal pair established *Sawantwadi Lacquer Ware*. Finding out things through trial and error,





they have conducted experiments with innovative schemes and broaden the horizons of their range. Even though their globular *Dashavatara* cards are the fastest-selling, they proffer sets bedecked with alphabets, tarot, zodiac signs, and the *Mughal Ganjifa*.

The card-making procedure is one of congress line construction. One artisan cuts the card paper; a second engraves the outline and margins, whereas a third fills in hues and lacquers it. They devise 5 packs of 120 cards at a time, and it takes the squad of three artisans and 20 part-time artists two weeks to do so (**Fig. 6**). Rani Satvashiladevi time and again urges the artisans to re-erect certain designs to contentment and approval. For her pains in safeguarding local crafts, she has won the ‘Master Craftsmen Award’ from the Maharashtra government.



**Fig. 6. Sawantwadi Ganjifa [Courtesy:History Speaks]**



Subhash Chitari, one of ten ancestral families in Sawantwadi who have made *dashavatara* or *navagraha Ganjifa* cards for at least five generations—sets sufficiently gorgeous to be integrated in the trousseau of Brahmin brides of Maharashtra—commented (as cited in De, 2003): “Funnily enough, the foreigners who buy our sets often use them under their glasses, as coasters”, sarcastically adding, “But we can’t make a living from these. We fill our bellies from the sale of small baskets of wooden fruits at Rs. 500 each.” Dr. Pramila Lochan also pointed out (Lochan, 2003): “...we find, to our utter dismay, many foreigners using *Ganjifa* cards as coasters!”

### ***Ganjam ‘Ganjapa’***

The *Ganjapa* cards, as they are called in Odisha, were formerly a component of community get-together and a frivolous activity. *Ganjapa* or *Ganjifa* prevailed as an influence of the Islamic rule in Odisha, and is still identified as *Mughal Ganjifa* in many regions of the state. The cards were named, according to the quantity of colours used in the whole set. For exemplar, if the bunch was made of eight colours, it would be named *Atharangi*, for 10 colours *Dasarangi*, 12 colours *Vararangi*, 14 colours *Chaudarangi* and 16 colours *Solarangi*. The Persian and *Mughal* manner of the game has been altered into artistic avatars with tales of the *Ramayana* or Krishna’s mythological tales depicted on them (Fig. 7).

*Ganjapa* of Odisha is unique for the patterns that flourished with the forefathers of artists like Banamali Mahapatra of Raghurajpur, Berhampur-based Sitakant Mahapatra, Appanna Mahapatra of Chikiti and Prakashchandra Mahapatra of Parlakhemundi, (all of them belongs to Ganjam district of Odisha). Though some affiliates in their family have



**Fig.7. Ganjam Ganjifa [Courtesy: History Speaks]**

learnt the art, the form is slowly fading due to lack of promotion. Banamali Mahapatra articulated (as cited in Panda, 2014): “All traditional art and craft forms were born out of necessity and hence flourished as they were a part of daily life of people. But when we do not find something useful in our daily lives, it becomes a challenge to preserve it”. The *Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi* president Siba Panigrahi confirmed that the akademi had begun initiatives with the aim of preserving the art variety.

### ***Raghurajpur Pattachitra***

The pioneering persona and National Award winner Banamali Mahapatra (Fig. 8) is





himself the nucleus of *Pattachitra Crafts Village* at Raghurajpur (a legacy crafts community in Puri district, Odisha), which is branded for its proficient *Pattachitra* painters: “an art form which dates back to 5 BC in the region” (Wiki).



***Fig.8. Banamali Mahapatra at Pattachitra Crafts Village [Courtesy: The Craft and Artisans]***

More than a decade ago, he divulged the tight spot of the technique that nosh his ancestors for more than ten generations, in 2006, Pooja Ratnakar, co-founder of *Kadam India* (a small voluntary equip striving to form sustainable, craft-based source of revenue) saw some wraithlike elderly men at Raghurajpur; these were the last few players of Dashavatar *Ganjifa* in the village. Ratnakar's rendezvous with *Ganjifa* began inadvertently. In a little while she started playing *Ganjifa* with them (as cited in Krishna, 2015): “As I played, I realized the wealth of history and myth that the game had. Although the old men gambled with the cards,





they believed that as they were chanting the names of Vishnu, playing *Ganjifa* cleansed them of all sins.” She became utterly astounded (as cited in Krishna, 2015): “When I held a *Ganjifa* card in my hand, I couldn't believe that it had been made from old cotton saris, that its very canvas took at least seven days to prepare and that it had been made in accordance with centuries-old rituals.”

After a precious four years’ breach Ratnakar returned to Raghurajpur in 2010; sadly by then, only one participants from the original assemblage stayed put—Banamali Mahapatra, and he too was in poor health and not getting any younger. Through *Kadam*, Ratnakar fashioned a *Ganjifa* kit with Mahapatra. She remembered (as cited in Krishna, 2015): “It took the old artist almost a month to make the first kit, but the end result was exquisite. To market it, I approached museums across the world and discovered many were interested.” In due course, orders began trickling in. A set of hand-painted, round cards is priced between Rs 10,000 and Rs 20,000, depending on their sophistication. Ratnakar has a strong conviction that if the stories on the subject of our handicrafts can be connected with the world, escalating a bazaar for them wouldn't be thorny.

An enthused Sesh Seshadri said (as cited in Krishna, 2015): “I was so fascinated by the story of *Ganjifa* that I just couldn't sit back and watch it fade away.” He is the head of **Overleaf Books**, a didactic consultancy that provides learning resources to schools. In 2014, *Overleaf* ratified employment for Mahapatra and embarked on to pay for apiece *Ganjifa* set he prepared all through this time. Ratnakar further stated (as cited in Krishna, 2015): “The prospect of regular orders has enabled Mahapatraji to train younger artists, ensuring that at least in Raghurajpur, the tradition of *Ganjifa* stays alive a little while longer.” She also has



plans in her pocket to exert with other customary *Ganjifa* spots in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal.

### *Naqqash of Nirmal*

The sets of delicately painted *Ganjifa* playing cards, lying at the *Nirmal Toys and Arts Showroom* (*Nirmal* is a Municipality in Adilabad district in the new-fangled state of Telangana), may well have been the final ones to be made. Octogenarian Boosani Narsingam, the ‘*Naqqash* craftsman’ (a painter on wood and a sculptor) is one of the few creators of *Ganjifa* cards in the State. Seeing that neither his brood nor others from the community have cultured the talent, he told that this form of craft will evaporate. “Though I do not know the intricacies of the game itself I learnt to make these rounded papier [mâché] from my ancestors” unveiled (as cited in Singh, 2010) the artisan, adding: “Although sold rarely these days, the playing cards fetch good price even now”. What’s more, the geo-political split of Andhra Pradesh has made the famed artisans uneasy concerning their future. They are clueless about the future of the *AP Handicrafts Development Corporation Ltd* in the post-bifurcation circumstances. The sponsorship of the *Corporation* has so far kept the fire alive in the hearths of the underprivileged artists who have made handicrafts since the last four centuries (Fig. 9).

A few others from Nirmal, like N. Satyanarayan, also shared their predicament (as cited in De, 2003): “We make Changa rani sets, our version of the Moghul *Ganjifa*, which sell[s] for about Rs. 2,000. My two older sons and I also make 120-card *Dashavatara sets*, which are more expensive. But most of the year, we do wooden and lacquer toys, which have



a larger market". Speeches like this elucidate why an artist from Kashmir, the source of splendid papier-mâché sets, could carry out just seven foretaste cards at a Mumbai exhibition. The Foujdar clan from Bishnupur, were missing from such practicum, as they were mortified to come back home devoid of selling their cards.



**Fig.9. Andhra Pradesh Ganjifa [Courtesy: History Speaks]**

### *A View Beyond*

As referred at the very beginning, it is assumed that *Ganjifa* card games were conceptualized to tutor, study and narrate stories and *shlokas* from the Hindu *Puranas*, stories from the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, among others. The game did not merely boast momentous artistic bent, but it was brought into play to convey people in concert for a



collective rationale; to amuse and egg on a socio-cultural outlook. The *Ganjifa* game also bore some sacred shade. People intoned the names of divinities while playing these cards, generating a sanctimonious ambiance. Legendary cryptograms and deities were painted intricately by the artists on to the cards, and as a brain-teasing pastime, *Ganjifa* enjoyed a good deal of popularity in medieval times. Amid a plummet of blue blood empires and supremacy, the *Ganjifa* artists have not only lost support but also recognition.

“No one knows exactly how to play *Ganjifa*. The current digitally-hooked generation isn’t interested in such traditional games nor is it interested in the pure art form,” the bleak voice of Mr. Narasimhan, superintendent at *Sri Jayachamarajendra Art Gallery* attested (as cited in Shimladka, 2015). Today, a number of centres do arrange workshops for making people attentive of this impressive art variety. One such exclusive window is *Ganjifa Art Gallery* set up by the *Hasta Shilpa Trust* of Manipal in its Heritage Village. A UNESCO-lauded establishment, it offers a wide-ranging continuum of *Ganjifa* motifs and methods in practice.

“The *Ganjifa* Art has been dying out in India, due to lack of interest, time it takes to craft, and prohibitive costs. When I started researching, it was on the brink of being lost. Unfortunately, it is still on the brink of being lost,” opined Janin Wise (as cited in Nighoskar, 2015), a card-game admirer from US and an affiliate of SCA—*Society of Creative Anachronism*—that endorses medieval pastime. She has made exhaustive study on the *Ganjifa* art, and has a gut feeling and disappointment that such unparalleled art is not cherished in the nation of its basis. Wise placed order for a *Ganjifa* set from *amazon.com*, but to her bitter realization, she felt exceedingly disillusioned at both the quality and art-work





when it reached destination. She has geared up exertions since then to enliven these aged card forms, and made a PDF version of apiece game she has investigated accessible online to everyone yearning to learn.

### *Are We There Yet?*

It is amazingly inspirational to witness enthusiasts like Janin Wise attempting to stimulate an art form that's core to India; at the same time, it is moreover unacceptable that an Indian inheritance get almost nothing of the deserved ovation at abode. As we continue being swayed by globalization, people frequently inquire the need to conserve fading dexterities, disagreeing that as cultures develop, long-established practices get inexorably substituted by newer ones. *Ganjifa* is just one instance of the numerous Indian art-forms that are gradually becoming extinct, as they are not commercially feasible in their own land of origin. Also, the 'gambling' tag attached to playing cards misleads its educative value as an art form.

Survival is not simple, but there should be grit and vow; it is our courage that keeps us afloat, in other words. Awareness is the first step, generating a demand, the next: opines a UNESCO correspondent, and this should be our line of thought too. Art forms should be given some veneration; or else it won't be long before our generation overlooks not only them, but perhaps even the Indian mythology, a grand motive why *Ganjifa* was formed in the first place. It is well-needed now to pen down a detailed write up covering the still-breeding places of this classic pastime; they largely remain overlooked, ranging from Rajasthan to Nepal and from Mysore to Kashmir. With its intricacy and splendid past, *Ganjifa* has major



prospective as an edifying occurrence, a sport as much for individual residence or clubs.

Once a profound fascination of kings and masses, *Ganjifa* stares toward a fresh cohort to attempt another round.



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