

Report on Patachitra of West Bengal

Statement of case

1. Origin & History

History of the Districts (Paschim Medinipur, Purulia, Bankura, Birbhum)

Medinipur:

Medinipur district (undivided) is rich with ancient history of royal dynasty and their royal activities. The kingdom of Swasthanka, Harshabardhan was the part of undivided Medinipur. One of the archaeological sites was the port at *Tmaralipto* which is present day Tamluk in the divided Purba Medinipur district. After the fall of last independent Hindu dynasty of Kalinga the region came under one of the five Sarkars of Mughalbandi Odisha which was ruled by the Subehdar of Odisha. Bahadur Khan was the ruler of Jaleswar Sarkar or Hijli (including Medinipur) during the time of Shah Jehan. He was defeated by Shah Suja, the second son of Shah Jehan, then the *subhadar* of Bengal. Latter on the region comes under the control of Nawab Alivardi Khan.¹

Purulia: Jaina Bhagavati-Sutra of circa 5th century A.D. mentions that Purulia District was one of the 16 Mahajanapadas and was a part of the country known as *Vajra-bhumi* in ancient times. However, little is known about Purulia before the East-India Company obtained the 'Diwani' of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa in 1765. By Regulation XVIII of 1805, a Jungle Mahal district composed of 23 Parganas and mahals including the present Purulia was formed.

Bankura: The history of the district of Bankura from the 7th century AD right until the advent of British rule is dominated by the Hindu Rajas of Bishnupur. The area around Bishnupur was called Mallabhum.

Birbhum: Birbhum district was dominated by different dynasties for centuries. It was once a part of Mauryas and the majestic Guptas. The name Birbhum came to be recognized as an administrative unit only after the Santhal rebellion of 1855-56, which was overwhelmed with the martyrdom of Sidhu and Kanu.

¹L.S.S. O'Malley (1996). Bengal District Gazetteer-Midnapore. Page number 22-37 (Annexure C.II)

History of the Patachitra of West Bengal:

Patachitra known for its brilliant play of colour is a traditional folk art form of rural Bengal that has been in existence for many centuries. It is world's first attempts to create motion pictures. There are varying opinions about the dates of ancient *Patas* but it has been suggested on the basis of historical themes connected with the accompanied songs. It dates back to the Pre- Pala period from the days of Mohenjodaro to the 9th century A.D. It is still tucked away with small villages of Midnapore, Bankura, Purulia, Howrah, Hooghly and 24 Parganas.² Although in Buddhist literature there is reference of pata in 1st century A.D.; in Haribansha in 2nd century, in Abhijnynasakuntalam and Malabikagnimitra in 4th century; in Kaya Khondasanjukta in 6th century, Harashacharit and Uttaramcharit 6th and 7th- 8th centuries. These literatures speak about certain types of *Pata* which were exhibited to educate and to entertain the people.³

Author Ajitcoomar Mookerjee in his book Folk Art of Bengal has mentioned that there are some Jadu-Patuas painting of mural style in the temples of Bankura District. As the Bankura districts were not disturbed by the foreign influence its cultural integrity remained uninfluenced and the places like Mallbhum which is also called 'Land Of Wrestler' still hoards in its bosom. In the paintings of Bankura line drawing of greater efficiency has been shown. The salient features of the paintings are- The lines are distinctly bold swift and attractive. The techniques which are used is bold and simple. The dignified attitude and novelty of form of the figures reveals the traditional hands of artists.⁴

In the book of D.P. Ghosh titled "Folk Art of Bengal", variation of the style of *Patachitra* painting in respect of the district of West Bengal has been mentioned.⁵

The *Patachitra* of different districts of West Bengal are characterized by many peculiarities in colour and design. The products of Manbhum (now known as Purulia) can easily be distinguished by their preference for one particular shade of burnt sienna relieved by white and yellow patches and densely packed composition. The seated figures of Dasratha and Chand Sadagar of Midnapore crowning the Ramayana and Kamale-Kamini scrolls are impressive and monumental. In the scrolls of Birbhum, Bankura and Burdwan preference for Indian red background usually found while Hooghly preferred a dark brown. The abstract linear treatment of the Hooghly and Manbhum 'pats' are peculiar and definitely modernistic. The technique of meandering river of Mahakapi Jatka at Sanchi also survives in the undulating Yamuna in

² Craft council of west Bengal (1985-86), *The Jarana Patachitra of Bengal- Mahamaya*, Page number 112

(Annexure C.IV)

³ Roy Nirajan (1973), *The Patas and Patuas of Bengal*. Indian Publications Calcutta, Page number 54-55

(Annexure C.V)

⁴ Mookerjee Ajitcoomar (1939), *Folk Art of Bengal*. University of Calcutta, Page number 18-19 (Annexure C.VI)

⁵ GHOSH D.P. (1977), *FOLK ART OF BENGAL*, Visvabharati, Page number 4-5 (Annexure C.I)

Krishnalila pat from Midnapore dividing at the same time connecting the exploits of young Krishna in a typical Indian manner.

Ramayana manuscript of Tulsidas, dating 1772 A.D from Midnapore district, collected by the author from Murshidabad and now preserved in the Asutosh museum. The painting about 150 in number (some of them are shown in figure) are undoubtedly the finest we know of the transitional period between the late mediaeval classical Indian style and the folk idiom.⁶

These days the *chitrakaras* (painters) of Midnapore and Purulia districts are the only ones involved with *pata* making. The *patuas*, painters, also serve as priests for the *Santhal* community, and make *patas* with *Santhal* folklore. The craft has been affected by the onslaught of lithography, oleography and bazaar pictures. The mythical narratives, contemporary tales and folklore painted on scrolls are carried from village to village, and narration is accompanied by folk songs⁷.

Sources:

- a. <http://www.bharatonline.com/west-bengal>
- b. <http://kanikanairsresearch.blogspot.in>
- c. GHOSH D.P. (1977), FOLK ART OF BENGAL, Visvabharati, Page number 03 (Annexure I)
- d. Bajpai.L.M. (2013), Intangible Heritage Transformations- *Patachitra* of Bengal exploring Modern New Media, International Journal of History and Cultural Studies (IJHCS) Volume 1, Issue 1, PP 1-13 ()
- e. L.S.S. O'Malley (1995) .Bengal District Gazetteer-Midnapore .Page number 22-37 (Annexure II)
- f. Craft council of west Bengal (1985-86), *The Jarana Patachitra of Bengal- Mahamaya*, Page number 112 (Annexure IV)
- g. Roy Nirranjan (1973), The Patas and Patuas of Bengal. Indian Publications Calcutta, Page number 54-55 (Annexure V)
- h. Mookerjee Ajitcoomar (1939), Folk Art of Bengal. University of Calcutta, Page number 18-19 (Annexure VI)
- i. GHOSH D.P. (1977), FOLK ART OF BENGAL, Visvabharati, Page number 4-5 (Annexure I)

⁶ GHOSH D.P. (1977), FOLK ART OF BENGAL, Visvabharati, Page number 4 (Annexure C.I)

⁷ GHOSH D.P. (1977), FOLK ART OF BENGAL, Visvabharati, Page number 2 (AnnexureC. I)

- j. GHOSH D.P. (1977), FOLK ART OF BENGAL, Visvabharati, Page number 4 (Annexure I)
- k. GHOSH D.P. (1977), FOLK ART OF BENGAL, Visvabharati, Page number 2 (Annexure I)

2. Technical Specification

Patas can be painted in two different styles- *Jarano Pata* and *Chouko Pata*. There are various length and duration of *patas*: those with 10 to 15 rectangular panels are known as *latai patas*, those of 6 to 8 oblong panels are the *Arelatai patas* and there are also smaller square *chaukhosh patas*.

A few samples of the item:


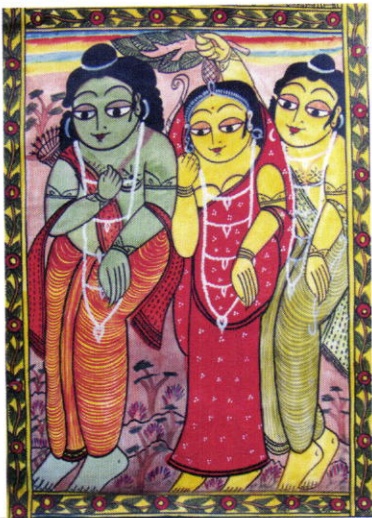
- Shape: Large, Medium, Small
- Size: Large- 7ft * 2.5 ft, Medium: 4ft * 1.5ft , Small- 1.5 ft * 1ft
- Weight –Large-2 kg, Medium-500g, Small-100g
- Colour : Multi-colour



Figure 3.4.7 : Square Patachitra (Chouko Pat)
(2ft * 2ft) PC: banglanatak dot com



Figure 3.4.8: Sling Bag
(14" * 8")
PC: banglanatak dot com

	
<p>Figure 3.4.9: <i>Patachitra</i> painting on apparel/ T- shirt Available in different sizes PC: banglanatak dot com</p>	<p>Figure 3.4.10: Part of a long scroll on <i>Ramayan</i> (7ft * 2.5ft) PC: banglanatak dot com</p>

3. Uniqueness:

A single piece of cloth 12" × 2" long tied by two small bamboo sticks on both ends and pasted with paper there on is used by the scroll painters for drawing the scenes. Sometimes hard sheets of such length and size are alone used. It is really a wonder to see how dexterously the painters depict all events or episodes of the Ramayana or the Mahabharata or the stories of Manasa-Mangala or Chandi-Mangala. They sing simple narrative songs or ballads relating to these stories and show the public their scrolls while singing from door to door. To make the colours steadfast, each is mixed within the broken shells of coconut with gum made from grinding the seeds of the wood-apple tree and mixing with required quantities of water. Sometimes, the seeds of wood-apple are substituted with the seeds of tamarind, sap from the margossa tree or egg-yolk.

There are three types of formats in *Patachitra* - the vertical scroll, horizontal scroll and a single quadrangular sheet. The width of the paintings may be from one to two feet, while the length can be up to 25 feet. There are different stylistic characteristics such as the distinct tribal style of the Santhal patas, those from Birbhum, show an over indulgence of emotion and sentiment and the Bengali style in the Kalighat bazaar patas. Although Bankura and Birbhum are neighbouring area, yet there is a good deal of difference between the two local varieties. Linear reduction into straight pleat like folds of drapery, often floriated is a characteristic of Bankura present from the early times. Moreover the head is seldom represented other than in a sharp and angular profile. An unique Ramayan 'Pat' from Bankura shows in

the upper panel Durga being worshipped by Rama and his retinues and in the lower part the animated and vigorous fight between Vanaras and Rakshasas. Birbhum on the other hand favours a three quarter view. This will be evident from this remarkable Bastraharana 'Pat' from Brtachari Museum (also known as Gurusaday Museum, Bratacharigram, Joka, Kolkata, India) remarkable alike for the grouping of compact figures of the Gopies as well as the soft plasticity of their bodies. The conventional double eye brow is another unique feature invariably employed by the Birbhum *Patua*. These are some of the traits and stylistic elements that would help us in identifying the products of many districts.

In addition of aforementioned descriptions here are the salient features of West Bengal *Patachitra* which is mainly famous for the *Patachitra* of Naya village.

- The figures of the *Patachitra* looks like the classical Egyptian or Messopotemian style. Most figures depicted with frontal chest, profile head and limbs. No strict human proportions are there that means the size of the figure and limbs varies in respect of the space available for the *Patachitra*.
- Artists uses different colour in respect of the characters and suitable rendition of the themes so that it can be catchy and easily understandable to all kinds of peoples. Except borders organic shapes are painted in *Patachitra*. The paintings are two dimensional without shadings.
- The subjects or themes are chosen from story of ancient god and goddesses and also modern trends of civilization or social problems of society.
- The human figures are drawn with very strong facial expression so that the situation can be easily understood by the emotion. Use of contrasting colours helps the audience to view it quite clearly.
- The main characters are placed at the centre of the *Patachitra* and the emphases are given on principle figures.
- The *Patachitra* are narrative in style. Specific songs are accompanied with the *Patachitra*. The songs are composed by the artist who has made the *Patachitra*.

- In respect of thematic analysis- (i) In Ramayana Pata Karmayoga and ancient life styles are expressed. (ii) Spiritual and Philosophical truths are conveyed by Shkatipata (iii) Spiritual loves are expressed by Krishnaleela.

Impact of the environment:

Patachitra artists use natural colours from flowers, leaves, fruits, roots etc. All these are locally available. The scandals, accidents, mythological stories, regional folklore, social problems, and other local issues are depicted in the form of *Patachitra* which is entertaining as well as used as a media to educate peoples and spread awareness.

Human skill:

The *pata* depictions are drawn only from the pure rasa of the inspired memory of *chitrakar*'s mind, they can never be copied from the photograph.

4. Socio-economic Profile:

Prior to the 1980s, Patuas were mainly men. Since then after training was offered to them, women too began to paint and sell. Times have changed for the Patuas of Medinipur and especially for most at Naya. The more fortunate ones have seen a significant rise in their earnings, while others mainly depend on the sale of their works to art lovers and research scholars, fairs and festivals and eagerly wait to be invited to workshops or trade fairs to popularize their craft and to earn a living.

The socio economic conditions of these artists have been showing signs of gradual improvement in the last couple of years with some of them gaining international recognition. Since 2004, banglanatak dot com is working with Patuas in Pingla to rejuvenate the dying art form. The Patuas have learned to make diverse products using their painting skills. They are also using their art from as tool for social communication. The art form has become a means of livelihood. This has led to reduction of poverty and most importantly empowerment of the women in the community. The Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre (with support of Ministry of Rural Development) supported capacity building and promotional activities during 2005-2009. Today young people are learning the art from their living Gurus. Project Ethno-magic Going Global (EGG), an initiative by banglanatak dot com supported by the European Union has facilitated interaction between Patuas and Contemporary painters and new media artists from Europe. Health insurance has been provided to the artists and their families.

At present Pingla is one of the 10 Rural Craft Hubs which is being supported by Department of MSME&T, Govt. of West Bengal in collaboration with UNESCO. Banglanatak dot com is the implementing partner. During the course of the project, which started from 2013, WBKVIB has come forward and constructed a Resource Centre in the village which functions as gallery, common work space, office room of the cluster etc. Furnished accommodation for guests is also available at the Resource Centre since the village has become a cultural destination attracting tourists and visitors all through out the year. As part of the exchange collaboration Patuas have travelled abroad to UK, France, USA, Taiwan, Bahrain to participate in International festivals to showcase their art. Artists in Pingla celebrate their annual festival "PotMaya" since 2010. The next village festival will take place on Nov 11-13, 2016.

Well Known Artist:

Anwar *Chitrakar*, born in 1980, is a traditional Patua painter from *Paschimbanga* and has been practicing the art for 20 years. He has participated in many group exhibitions in India and abroad, including the Berlin Festival in April 2012 and the Namaste India Festival in Japan in October 2012. He won the State Award (West Bengal) in 2002 and the National Award in 2006. His painting of Goddess Durga is a part of the fabulous Art collection by leading Artists at the Mumbai International Airport. Gurupada Chitrakar is also a National award winner. Moreover there are master artists like Manu Chitrakar, Mantu Chitrakar, Swarna Chitrakar, Rahim Chitrakar, Manimala Chitrakar etc.

1.	Number of cooperative societies involved	1
2.	Total no of crafts man / Family	230 / 70 families
3.	Average earning per family	Rs. 12000
4.	Average production per day	depends on the size of the work

5. Annual turnover on sale of the product :

Annual turnover year wise (latest 5 years)

The following figures show the earning of the Patuas in Pingla who are members of their collective Chitrataru

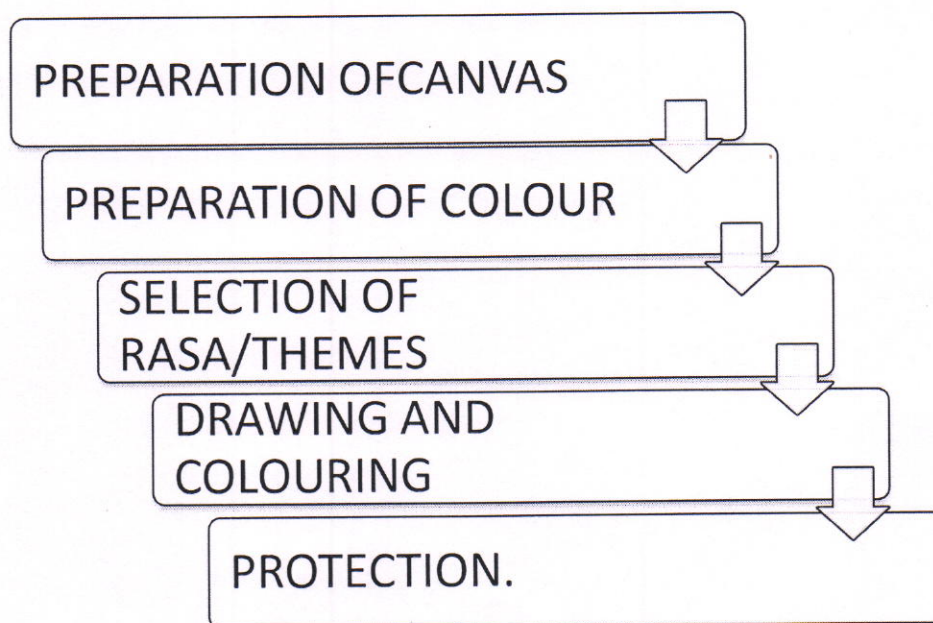
Year	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Annual Turnover	1Crore	1.18 Crore	1.3 Crore	1.5 Crore

6. Production Process

Tools:

- **Brushes:** Previously the brushes used were made of fur obtained from the shoulder of goats or buffalo and classified according to age of the animals which gives graded hardness or softness. A piece of cloth tied at the end of the brush also served as a substitute to it sometimes in order to draw thicker lines or applying dots for decoration. For fine painting rat hairs were used. At present brushes available in the market are used.
- **Kiya plant:** The stem of Kiya plant was used for drawing thick lines.
- **Coconut shell (Sadhei):** It is used for mixing colours and gum obtained from wood apple (*Bel*).
- **Scissor:** For cutting of canvas in accordance of requirement to complete the selected motif of *Patachitra*.
- **Oven:** For drying and providing stiffness to finished *Patachitra*.
- **Others:** Ghasa pathar(peeble stone), grinding stone, pestel stones are also used for different purposes.

Here are the five steps which are followed to prepare a complete *Patachitra* of West Bengal



Preparation of canvas:

Traditionally the canvas was prepared by the artists themselves. The cloth on which the painting would be done was coated with chalk stone powder and glue. Glue is made from tamarind seeds. The chalk powder and glue is mixed in equal proportion generally but it may also vary according to the atmosphere keeping in mind the humidity. After the coating it was rubbed with stone to make the surface polished. The rice powders are added also to make it stiff. It was then left for few days to develop strength and semi absorbent surface. The prepared canvas was cut in respect of required sizes by scissor. At present hand made papers are used.

Preparation of colour:

The colours are mixed in empty shells of broken coconuts (which serve as a palette) with the help of water and home-made glue. The following are the most important natural colours used by the *patuas*-

- **White:** White colours are made by grinding the conch shell (*Sankha*). The grinded fine powder is mixed with water in a earthen pot. It is allowed to sediments particles. The sedimented particles are removed. The rest of the portion filtered and dried to have thick white colour. In preparation of other pigments the raw materials are grinded with stone first then mixed with other in accordance of thickness of the colour needed.
- **Yellow:** Yellow is made from turmeric or soil
- **Green:** Green is made from leaves of hyacinth bean plant or the leaves of wood apple,
- **Purple:** Purple is from black plum or blackberry, Conch-shell powder or white mud gives the white colour, Brown colour is obtained from limestone mixed with black catechu,
- **Red:** Red is made from vermillion, *alta* (a reddish or scarlet ink or dye solution used for coloring feet), or terracotta soil,
- **Grey:** Grey is obtained from the soot from earthen ovens,
- **Blue:** Blue is obtained from Aparajita flower
- **Black:** Black is obtained from scrapping the soot off from the outside bottoms of clay pots or even burning rice and pounding it to a powder to which is added home-made glue for required consistency or by burning the roots of the velvet apple trees.



Figure 8.2.1: Raw materials for preparing colour "bell" wood apple (*Limonia acidissima*); used to prepare gum..
PC: banglanatak dot com



Figure 8.2.2: Raw materials for preparing colour- Pat beans
PC: banglanatak dot com



Figure 8.2.3: Raw materials for preparing red colour- Segun
PC: banglanatak dot com



Figure 8.2.4: Raw materials for preparing colour ; turmeric (*Curcuma longa*)
PC: banglanatak dot com



Figure 8.2.5: Raw materials for preparing colour- 'Seem' (Flat Beans)
PC: banglanatak dot com



Figure 8.2.6: Grinding of raw materials on *shila* with stone
PC: banglanatak dot com



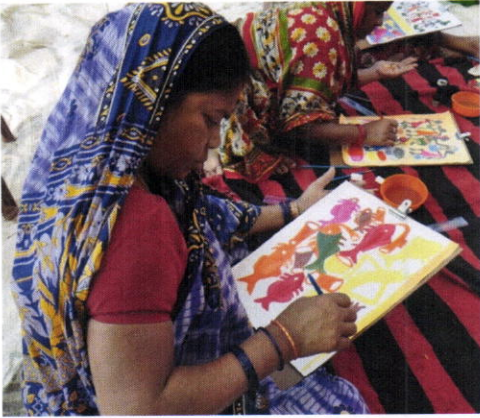
Figure 8.2.7: Coconut shells to keep the colour after preparation and used at the time of painting

PC: banglanatak dot com

Selection of Rasa/Themes:

The *pata* depictions of social leaders generally drawn only from the pure rasa of the inspired memory of *chitrakar's* mind, they can never be copied from the photograph.

Drawing and colouring: After having the canvas, the borders are drawn first. It is notable that charcoal or pencils are not used for the preliminary drawing. The background colours selection and filling is known as “Pahili rang bhara” in which red background are mostly used. Then the figures are completed and decorated.

	
<p>Figure 8.4.1 : colour filling on the border of the <i>Patachitra</i></p> <p>PC: banglanatak dot com</p>	<p>Figure 8.4.2: Artist is doing the last part of initial drawing.</p> <p>PC: banglanatak dot com</p>
	
<p>Figure 8.4.3 : Artists are busy with arrangement of the space of the canvas and initial drawing</p> <p>PC: banglanatak dot com</p>	<p>Figure 8.4.4: Artist busy with further decoration and furnishing.</p> <p>PC: banglanatak dot com</p>

Protection:

Completed paintings are held over charcoal fire and lacquered which makes it water resistant, durable and gives a glazed varnished look.



Figure 8.5.1: The painted *Patachitra* are drying under sun upside down

PC: Personal Collection of Amitava Gupta

7. List of association of persons/ producers/ organization/ authority

Chitrataru, Village – Naya, GP – Maligram, Block – Pingla, District – Paschim Medinipur, Pin – 721140

List of Artisans are enclosed in Annexure A

8. Inspection Body

1. Director, Directorate of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of West Bengal
2. The Chief Executive Officer, West Bengal Khadi & Village Industries Board
3. Director, MSME - Development Institute, Government of West Bengal
4. Director, District Industries Centre of concern region
5. Representative of Patent Information Centre, West Bengal State Council of Science and Technology, Government of West Bengal
6. Director, West Bengal State Export Promotion Society
7. Representative of Banglanatak.com

Along with the statement of Case in Class (a) 16 in respect (b) Painting and Artists material (a) 24 in respect (b) Textile materials of (d) The Secretary, Chitrataru , who claims to represent the interest of the producers of the said goods to which the geographical indication relates and which is in continuous use since 100 years in respect of the said goods.

The application shall include such other particulars called for in rule 32(1) in the Statement of Case. Enclosed

All communications relating to this application may be sent to the following address in India:

Patent Information Centre

West Bengal State Council of Science & Technology (WBSCST)

Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of West Bengal

Vigyan Chetana Bhavan,

Block DD, Plot 26/B, Sector 1, Salt Lake, Kolkata-700 064

West Bengal

Telefax—033 2321 1342/ 2334 4616,

e-mail-picwbscst@gmail.com

- i) In case of an application from a convention country the following additional particulars shall also be furnished. NA
- ii) Designation of the country of origin of the geographical indication. N.A
- iii) Evidence as to the existing protection of the geographical indication in its country of origin, such as the title and date of the relevant legislative or administrative provisions, the judicial decisions or the date and number of registration, and copies of such documentation. NA



Montu Chitrakar

Secretary, Chitrataru

Village: Naya, P.O. & P.S. - Pingla

District: Paschim Medinipur, PIN: 721140