

Art Heritage of Jharkhand : A Study of Ghodasimar temple of Satagaowa in Koderma District

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The Regional Centre of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Ranchi, has started a study program "Documentation of Art Heritage of Jharkhand". Under this program, a team of researchers consisted of Dr. Harendra Prasad Sinha, former Deputy Director (archaeology), Department of Culture, Government of Jharkhand led by Dr. Bachchan Kumar, Regional Director, Ranchi Regional Centre of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, visited Satagaowa Block of Koderma district of Jharkhand during 23rd to 24th September, 2017. This block is around 50 Kms away from the HQ which has archaeological remains representing rich cultural heritage of Jharkhand

There is a temple called as Ghodasimar located at dumdum village (the name of revenue village 'Deoghar') on the bank of the river Sankari under Pataiya Panchayat. This temple is erected on mount of the debris of ancient temples. The temple is bounded by Sheopuri village to the east; its west side, Darsania Nala flows. To its northern side, bank of the river Sankari is located. Its southern side, Mahabar hill is situated.

Myths

Ghodasimar temple is the main temple of the village where a *Jyotilinga* is worshipped at the sanctum sanctorium. People of the area consider that it is one of the 12 *Jyotilinga* in India. The temple has myths. It is believed that the cultivable lands of the surrounding area do not require water for agricultural production. It is also believed that the lands have so many bricks and stone but they are not removed. On their removal, the crop production of the land may hamper. So cultivators do not remove those bricks and stones. It is believed that at the surrounding areas there may have dozens of tanks. A 45 kilometers away from the temple, there is a Dibaur Ratnapur hill. At the top of the hill, there is a stone water tank and blacksmithy implements. People consider that from this top of the hill, lord Viswakarma (architect of the universe) had built 110 temples in a night. The Siva and other temples were built by lord Viswakarma himself. But no one can see it. On the wall of the stone, 1336 sak sambat is inscribed. The Mahavar hill has water fall. From it water flows through seven tanks and at the end it waster wastes in the nalas. These wasted water can be utilised for irrigation of land There is a Baijanath hill some kilometers away from the temple. It is believed that at foot of hill, there is a tunnel which has a golden temple of lord Siva..

Art of the Temple

The architecture of the temple is very simple. The temple is doom shaped and is white washed by limes. A series of steps lead to the sanctum sanctorum. An image of *Nandi*, the carrier of Shiva, is placed at the entrance plate form of the temple. The face of the Nandi is almost defaced. A broken stone stupa is placed nearby Nandi. A small image of Ganesha is placed outside the iron fence of Nandi. On the right side of the wall of the main temple, there is a relief of Hanumana.

The stone door jam is well adorned with nicely carved reliefs. Inside the temple, there are images of Ganesha and other deities. The *peetha* of the *linga* is round. On offering the milk on the *linga*, one can see the image of god Shiva on the *lingam*. A number of stone sculptures collected from the temple complex are placed on the back of the right side of the temple. Some of the sculptures are fixed with cement on the walls and floors of the main temple.

In front of the foot of the main temple, there is a small temple in which 3 feet statue of Hanumana is placed. The lord Hanumana is carrying Rama and Lakshmana on his shoulders. The god is heavily bejeweled and well-dressed adorned with a crown.

On the right side of the temple, there is another temple where a black stone image of Vishnu is worshipped. The god is in standing posture having two hands placed on the head of goddess Saraswati and goddess Lakshmi. There is *prabhachakra* behind the head of the statue. The archaeologists placed this statue to 12th century. I place this statue between 8th to 9th century A.D.

There is living temple of goddess Durga, I could not take the photograph of the statue as there were devotees worshipping the goddess. The priest of the temple was doing *astuti* to the goddess Durga.

Two black stone sculptures are placed in the open air. They belong to 8th or 9th century A.D. One sculpture is of god Sun and another is of a six handed image of goddess Mahisasura-mardini. The sculpture of Sun god is in standing posture holding in his two hands flowers. The deity is well dressed and bejeweled with armlets, bracelets, waistband and necklace. The horse driven chariot is not completely seen. Another image of six handed goddess Mahisasura-mardini is in sitting posture. She is sitting on buffalo. The goddess holds in her hands, shield, conch shell, *dhanu*, *cakra* etc. The body part of the deity is broken. On her right side, dwarf image of demon Mahisha is depicted. The goddess is well dressed with heavily bejeweled by necklace, armlets etc.

There are a number of mounts in this village which have debris of the temple. The people of the locality say that wherever they dig the ground of the mount, they find some sculptures or part of the temple. I have come across beautiful carved *amalaka* made of black stone and doorjambes having nice reliefs belonging to between 8th to 12th century A.D. I have found very nice pieces of sculptures scattered over the village. It is reported that some of sculptures are taken away by the villagers for worshipping.

The Ghodasimar has been a center of attraction during ancient time. It may be existing as an important religious centre. This site would have been a number of temples dedicated to Shiva, Vishnu, and other deities.

I recommend this area for the archaeological excavation which would of course yield nice sculptures and bring to light the hidden art heritage of Jharkhand. In this area, there is required to be set up a small museum where the sculptures could be placed for study.