

THE HISTORICAL PLACES OF TRIPURA : UNAKOTI, PILAK AND CHOBIMURA

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Fig.1 Ganesha panel from Unakoti Rock Sculpture



Fig.2 Durga panel from Chobimura Rock Sculpture

Abstract : Tripura is rich in archeological resources. This sacred land of Tripura is said to be a treasure trove of architectural sculpture. Ajanta and Ellora came to the forefront when it comes to architecture and sculpture in different parts of India. But Unakoti, Chobimura, and Pilak in Tripura have not been as the historical areas of India. Because of the inadequacy of communication. Unakoti's giant face attracts visitors and travel thirsty. But the Sculpture in the Chobimura is not far behind. There is a relief sculpture on a huge rock cut next to the river which attracts travel thirsty and researchers. Unakoti is a Known as Shaivatirtha. And the Chobimura is known as the place of Goddess Chakrakma. On the other hand, the Pilak art form is a complete exception, centered on Buddhists. But idols various gods and goddesses have also been discovered there. Copperplate with gold and silver coins is found in the Pilak region. But the Pilak region was created writers and researchers have written and discussed these three areas, but they have not yet been scientifically excavated. Most of the present writings on these three regions are based on fiction and Rajmala. There is no evidence that these three regions were created by the king of Tripura

Key words : Unakoti, Chobimura, Pilak relief, stone carving sculpture and architectures.

Tripura is a neighboring state of Bangladesh in the eastern part of India. Assam to the north, the border state of Mizoram to the east is connected with the mainland of India. The geographical location of the state of Tripura is 22 degree 56minutes to 24 degree 32 minutes north latitude and 91 degree 10 minutes to 92 degree 21 minutes east longitude. Tripura and India have a long international border of 639 km with Bangladesh in the north-east and south. Tripura is the third smallest state in India terms of area. The land of Tripura has its own spiritual Art, Culture, and Traditions. Tripura is also known for that several Architectural form and Rock-cut relief and stone carving sculpture, like Unakoti, Chobimura, and Pilak. All of these rezones are make Tripura is unique. These three sites bear artistic excellent of old Tripura kingdom. Unakoti literally meaning one less a koti in Bengali language hosts an ancient Shiva place of worship with huge rock-cut relief sculpture celebrating Shiva. Unakoti was made in 7th -9th century A.D. The marvelous rock -cut relief sculpture; murals with their primitive beauty are the main attraction for the all kind of art and history lover. Like Unakoti, Chobimura is also another important ancient site of Tripura which is basically 15th to 16th century's rock-cut relief carving image of Devi Durga. There are 37 rock-cut relief sculpture image

which also included image of Ganesha, Kartikaya, Mahishasurmardini, and also other image are there.

Pilak is another archaeological site in the Santirbazar sub-division of south Tripura district of the India state of Tripura. Many structure and image belong to Buddhist and Hindu sec, have been discovered here since 1927. The antiquities found here are dated on 8th to 12th centuries. Sandstone sculpture of the Pilak site, which represent a heterodox culture of Hinduism and Buddhism of 8th to 13th Century are on display at the govt. museum. These three rock-cut relief and stone carving sculpture archeological sites are bearing the ancient artistic excellence of Tripura. A simplification of carving can be seen in those art sites, Unakoti and Chobimura are created as bas reliefs where lots of free standing stone sculpture is available in Pilak. There are many mythological stories as stated in different ways about the rock-cut relief and stone carving sculptures formed in this land of Tripura. Many of the sculpture are dilapidated condition because of their age and non maintenance. Most of sculpture are had broken down. Rain, earthquake, waterfall and vegetation had ruined the once a holy place of Tripura.

The 'Rajmala' mentions the Unakoti pilgrimage to the king of Tripura, but there is no mention of the development of the region's art by the kings of Tripura. But the tribes of Tripura have some impressions of their cloths and ornaments. Such as the testimony of the crown of the head of Unakotiswara. In other words, the people of the kuki and Mizo communities of Tripura use some such ornaments while dancing in various festivals and celebration. There are indications of this in Rajmala. Unakoti hill is a wonderful example. The main face of Unakoti is not far from Shiva. Besides, there are some male heads engraved in Tantric rituals. There is another head carved some distance away. According to folklore, this idol is called Vishnu idol.

At the foot of the Unakoti hill, the three-faced stone idol is marked with the names Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara. There is another idol above the hill which has a five- face and eight-pointed bow and is named after the idol of Ravana. It can be seen that most of the idols of today are named by the public. There is not much scientific and research information about archeological resources. There are many stone sculptures in this pilgrimage area which have not been named yet. In addition to the statue of ravana, there is another sculpture with two arms. The common people identify it as a sculpture of Mandadari.

According to experts, Unakoti is one of the notable shaivatirthas of the pala period. Stone Sculpture of various deities was carved in the Unakoti region according to Indian mythology. Much such Sculpture could not be identified today. Scientific research is needed. Many such stone sculptures have been displaced due to natural disasters in the Unakoti region. Rock-cut relief sculpture and stone sculptures carved out of stone need to be identified by the sculptures. Prominent writers think that the imagery of some of the various sculptures of Unakoti does not seem to be in accordance with Hinduism. Probably Buddhism is considered to be a Tantric religion. Many such sculpture bear resemblance to the faces of the indigenous people of Tripura. Unakoti sculptures need to be properly identified. Because geologists believed that all those sculptures are made of limonite graceless or sedimentary rocks. The age of mountain is estimated ten lak years. According to Rajmala inscriptions, work began on the sculptures of king Trilochan Unakoti of Tripura. But according to Rajmala's information, it dose not get much recognition. This is because the experts are of opinion that the Rajmala is composed and exaggerated according to the instructions of the kings. But Rajmala cannot be completely ignored.

K.N. Dixit did not directly recognize the Ganesha panel sculptures in the Unakoti region as Ganesha, but as a sculpture associated with the Ganesha sect. He identifies the Vishnu idol, as well as the Ganesha panel, as previously identified, which he identifies as the surya idol, but there is no reason to say so. It is opinion of various experts that there is no sun idol in Unakoti region which is identified as Vishnu idol. Because the form of the sun is supposed to be absent.

Unlike Western Europe in the Stone Age, we had no evidence of true art. Moreover, our knowledge



Fig.3 Stone Sculpture from Pilak



Fig.4 Terracotta panel from Pilak

of the rock-cut art has not yet been properly assessed. The scope of the great Indus valley Civilization and Harappa culture was constantly increasing in every aspect, with little evidence of its contribution to art history. We have been aware of the existence of rock-cut sculpture for the last hundred years, but there was a lack of knowledge and then rock paintings were scientifically studied. Science-based research in Indian art has not done so well. Some research is being done on rock-cut architecture. Such as Bhimbetka, Ajanta and Ellora. Tripura is the third smallest state in India with an area 10,491.79sq.km. This small Tripura has a historical context. In term of the extent, Tripura extended from the 14th century to the 15th century to the Brahmaputra River in the north and west and Bay of Bengal in the south. From the kailashahar in ancient times. The word 'FA' meant father of chief. The kings of Tripura renamed the kingdom "Manikya" from the 14th century onwards and the Mughals acknowledged that glorious time by the mughals.

Tripura is one of the seven states in the Northeast. There are various places of worship in this state. Regardless of race tribe, worship is done together in a polite manner. Archaeological remains are reflected in the mountain ranges of the state. Various relief sculptures from the 7th century to the 15th century have given Tripura a worldwide historical Unakoti, Chobimura, and Pilak are particularly notable in Tripura. According to India religion and scriptures, these relief sculptures beautifully reflect the artistic form of the costumes, Ornaments and physical structures of the people of Tripura.

It's important in the historical context is immeasurable and has an aspect of research. There is a great need for reasoning and observation. With Unakoti al the wonderful work of art on the hill are a primitive art from. Today, its unknown at this time what he will do after leaving the post. But it is written in the traditional fiction of the local people. According to archeological research, Unakoti unique works of art constantly attract researchers. Although the 4th volume of 'RAJMALA' writes about Unakoti, it does not discuss much about the sculpture.

The unity in diversity is also found in this remote area of Tripura. Along with the Bengali language of Tripura, there is a beautiful combination of kok-borok language speaking tribes. At the same time, the art, culture and civilization of the people are involved. Similarly Unakoti is identified as a Shaibateertha irrespective of caste or creed. Although the state of Tripura is not huge compared to other states of India, it is no less in terms of art, culture and civilization. There is a lot of such information about Tripura in the 'Rajmala' of Tripura and in the mythological texts of India. This Tripura is rich in temple architecture, Sculpture, and relief sculpture, archeological resources. There are many patterns to found in the northern, southern and western region of Tripura. Unakoti, Chobimura, Pilak and the rest of Chobimura feature notable rock-cut relief sculpture and detached sculpture. Apart from the sculptures carved on the stone, there is no shortage of bronze and terracotta sculptures.

According to experts, its construction period is between the sixth and thirteenth centuries. Most of the sculpture of Unakoti and Chobimura are carved on a piece of stone. Unakoti's gigantic face, the idol of Shiva and the beautiful pattern of Mahishasurmardini on a huge stone in Chobimura. Sculpture is an integral part of the historical context of architecture. This art style the pre-medieval ideology.

According to information, most of Bangladesh (Kumilla) was included in Tripura in the 7th and 8th centuries. Because Tripura, Arakan and Barma were inextricably linked with the contemporary art style of Bengal. The external structure of the face, the broad shoulders, the bulging chest, the tubular arms and the oblong shape were part of the Burmese art style. According to the data, the architecture and sculpture of Tripura had a close relationship with the art style of Indian and abroad. According to expert and researchers, Tripura's rock-cut relief sculpture, architectural style and stone sculpture is an impeccable art form.

Not only rock cut relief sculptures of Unakoti in Tripura but also the stone carving sculpture of Pilak and terracotta sculpture are on display. Although no evidence of patronage of the king has been found in the sculpture art form of Tripura, remarkable art form proves that it was dominant. Pilak's gigantic sculpture i.e. sun statues and various sculptural styles are particularly noteworthy in North-East India. Pilak's sculpture is said to be completely identical and unique to other sculptural styles of India. It is also true that Indian archeologists and art historians are almost indifferent to Pilak, so Pilak's art history is very important, especially for the art of Tripura and the whole of India.

The individually in the bronze sculpture of Pilak was that it carried the identity of a clear tribal tradition. But it can be thought that it may have a relationship with the art style of the Pala period. Similar to the Avalokiteshwara sculpture of Pilak, other Avalokiteshwara of India can be found. Mahishasurmardini, Kalmara Vishnu, Ganesha, Narsingha, sculpture of Pilak had to be simply shaped, as it was impossible to show the skilful art style on the huge sandstone, so the artists of Pilak in Tripura were compelled to create in a simplified way. It is quite clear that no artistic beauty was damaged in any way. From this it is understood that the artists associated with Pilak were now devoted to the invention of their art and culture. The site was probably the center of Buddhist culture in Pilak between the eighth to ninth centuries.

It is noteworthy that most of the sculpture art in Pilak region is based on Buddhism. Much less than the Hindu religious bridge. There is no lack of variety in all the wonderful work of art. In terms of popularity, Avalokitesvara can be said to be realized only by a natural meditating Buddha. Many stone and bronze sculptures are housed in Government Museum in Agartala today. The architecture of the temple in Tripura dates from about the eighth to the middle of the thirteenth century, according to archeologists. In the social life of Tripura, irrespective of the present-day pilgrimage sites are the neglected Unakoti, Chobimura, and Pilak. Almost everyone is indifferent to the history of Tripura's architectural and sculptural style, an invaluable monument at the all-Indian level. Rich in archeological resources, these states are scattered throughout the region. There is a need for scientific research. That will be possible only as a result of the dedicated efforts of the government of India. Otherwise one day there will be nothing left. Because in the statement of scholar Kailash Chandra Singh about the heritage of Tripura, it can be clearly inferred that according to Rajmala, Vedic religion was not propagated in Tripura. There is ample evidence in Rajmala that the king of Tripura were worshippers of Shiva. According to Mahishasurmardini, the relief sculpture carved on the hillside of Tripura's Chobimura proves that time of its formation was about one and half thousand years ago, according to archeologists.

Let us be more aware of this great work of art. These archeological resources are not just the resources of the people of Tripura. Archeological resources throughout India and around the world. It remains to be seen when this historic site will be reclaimed by the left. Sculptures, Archeologists, Researcher, Artists, and Writers for this work. You have to come forward in a special way and fully engage yourself. Then something new is known.

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