



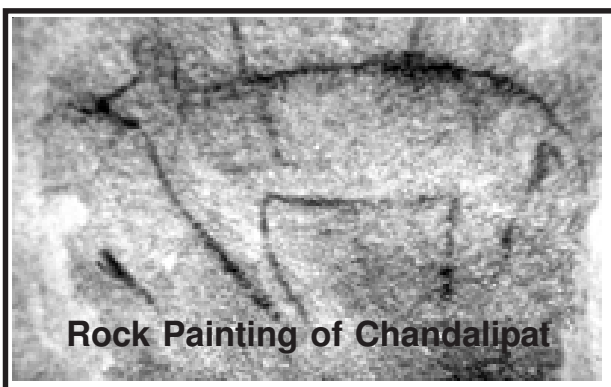
## ROCK ART HERITAGE OF POOJA DUNGURI

By : Rameswar Naik



Pooja Dunguri complex is a cluster of granite rocks surrounded by bushy forest spreading over 250 acres of 'Pahar Kishan' of land. It is located in the meting pace of Binka an Rampur Tahasil in the district of Subarnapur, Orissa. Taken together there are 27 'Dunguris' or rocky hills small and big aswell. Prominent among them are 'Pooja Dunguri', Ushakothi, Kabat Talei, Bagh Dunguri etc. While Pooja Dunguri and kabat talei are bigger in size and circumference, and are associated with the cult of goddess 'Chandlipat', the small-sized Ushakothi and Bagh

was defeated and driven out by the Gond Zamindar of Bheden. The defeated Zamindar took shelter at Pooja Dunguri, the cult spot of mother goddess Chandlipat. He was blessed by the duty and in a subsequent encounter regained his zamindari by defeating the intruder. An annual festival of "Dangar Yatra" is celebrated by the locals to commemorate this victory. The human representatives (Baruas) of the goddesses Chandlipat, Patmesri and Jharkhandien are taken in procession with traditional weapons and umbrellas to Pooja Dunguri on the occasion of Chaitra Purnima and sacrifices are offered at various places of the complex.



Rock Painting of Chandlipat

The cult of chandlipat is well-spread in surrounding villages like Chanabeda, Chandli Adakasa, Sialinali etc. alongwith the ex-zamindari region of Sukha and Sohela. Most of the inhabitants of the areas are Binjhals, Saharas and Kuda-Mirdhas, still leading the life of hunter-gatherers besides being wage-earners. Tribals of villages surrounding the Dunguri-complex largely depend upon the forest-products until now.

Dunguri contain rock-paintings in ochre colour. Even the miniature painting of an animal is found on a rock over Pooja Dunguri. The site is linked with the legend of "Gondmaru" (Gond Menace) of the second decade of 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to popular belief the Binjhal Zamindar of Rampur

The author has been conducting exploration of the complex since the last decade. He has also available financial assistance from the UGE for a minor research project entitled. "Culture sequence in the Pooja Dunguri complex: An ethno archaeological study; during 2001-03 and has submitted the project report.

With the best compliments from



**REMANDA  
SERVICE CO-OP SOCIETY  
Dist: BARGARH**

**Saroj Khamari**  
President

**Pramod Bhoi**  
Secretary



The surface exploration revealed that the granite rocks of the entire complex are profusely engraved. There are cup-marks, foot-prints, Sun-symbols, Ovals, Geometrical and non-geometrical lines and above all the Yoni marks symboling the prevalence of the primeval mother-cult. Besides the natural rock shelter of Usha Kothi contain a panel of paintings in Ochre colour. Some of them are now lost due to the vagaries of nature like water torrent and pigmentation while some other



PUJA DUNFURI

are disfigured and on the verge of extinction. But an animal figure the first one of the panel on the rock wall is still 'in situ' condition. The size of this painting of a deer-like animal is 2.5'x1.5'. Pegs over the body of the animal proves that it was meant for commemorative purpose. Probably the pre-historic man the inhabitant of the place used to take psychological strength from such a picture before going out in hunting expedition. Two other painting next to this one in the panel are faded beyond recognition now. In the initial stage of the exploration it seemed like the figure probably

of a lizard in vertical posture and a pig with pegs on the body. Overall, the painting of Ushakothi was used by the prehistoric man for hunting purpose. Another painting of an enigmatic nature is drawn on a triangur, vertical rock at Bagh 'Dunguri' beside a nalla (water stream). It contain zigzag lines, circle, curves etc. symbolic human figure might be hinted from this painting. It is difficult to make a meaning out of this picture. The picture of an animal in faint ochre paint figure on the vertical rock on Pooja Dunguri. It seems like a jackal or a horse in static position. This might be associated with the religious belief that goddess Chandlipat treads through the village at the dead of the night, riding over a white horse. On the other hand the figure of a jackal would symbolize that the herdsmen of this region wanted to propitiate it so that no damage is done to their calf or kids. Associated artifacts found from the complex prove that it was the resort of the pre-historic man. The fire includes microliths perforated stones, hand stone, varieties of pottery, cord impressed burnt clay, charred bones, bangles (glass and bronze), hematite nouddles etc. these, along with the rock painting and engravings especially of female genital marks execute on the rock surface of Pooja Dunguri and kabat Talei clearly prove that the place was the habitat of the pre-historic man of the Mesolithic age believing in a primeval mother cult.

The phenomena of rock art by the prehistoric man meant to express to express his feeling might range from 30,000 B.C. to 800 A.D. covering the stone ages and metal ages till the introduction of iron. In India we find rock art in

*With the best compliments from*

**TORA SERVICE CO-OP SOCIETY**

PO: TORA Dist: BARGARH (ORISSA)  
PIN 768040



**Madhusudan Bhoi**  
President

**Pabitra Bhoi**  
Secretary



upland hilly regions. Most of them are found at Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh. Due to the prevalence of a similar climatic and geomorphologic situation rock art is found in many places of Western Orissa. Prominent among them are Manikmada and Ushakothi in Sundergarh, Ulapgarh and Vikramkhol in Sambalpur, Gudahandi and Yogimath in Kalahandi. Out of the 66 painted rock shelters discovered in the western belt of Orissa so far, the newly constituted district of Sambalpur have the maximum with 32. there are 28 in Sundergarh while 2 in Jharsuguda; while the districts of Mayurbhanj, Subarnapur, Nuapada and Kalahandi contain one each. The only rock-art site in the district of Subarnapur is at Ushakothi in Pooja Dunguri complex. It is called 'Putlalekha' by the locals. This rock art heritage needs to be protected from the vagaries of nature and human vandalism.



*With the best compliments from*

**ADGAON SERVICE CO-OP SOCIETY**

Dist: BARGARH (ORISSA) PIN 768040

***Samir Singh***

President