

Cultural Study of Memorial Stones of Chikodi Region

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Abstract- Large Number of Memorial stones were found during my field Survey, Beautiful Memorial Stones were Classified in Sati-Stone, Hero stone, Nisidhis The Study of the Memorial Stones Provides interesting details of cultural as well as architectural aspects. An attempt is made here to co-relate with other memorial of the place and outside. It helps us to fulfill the gaps of history of the region and also the Cultural Contact or influence from outside or vise-versa. It may be noted that the memorial stones were hardly studies by any Scholars

Keywords- Culture, Inscriptions, Memorial Stone, Hero-Stone, Sati Stone, Nisiddhis Stone, Sahagammana, Shivaling, Nandi, Mahamandaleshwar

Introduction-

During the village-to-village survey of Archaeological and Epigraphic remains of the region large numbers of Memorial stones are found. They are classified into hero Stones, Sati Stones and Nisidhis of different period. The Study of the Memorial Stones Provides interesting details of cultural as well as architectural aspects. An attempt is made here to co-relate with other memorial of the place and outside. It helps us to fulfill the gaps of history of the region and also the Cultural Contact or influence from outside or vise-versa. It may be noted that the memorial stones were hardly studies by any Scholars. There are three hero stone, Sixteen Sati Stones, and three Nisidhis were encountered in the Chikodi region. The Sculptural art of these memorial Stones are critically studies below.

Sati-Stones:- Sati Custom is known as the Sahagamana. It is the expression of loyalty and devotion to husband as expressed by the wife by dying along with their deceased husband. However, it was not a universal practice. In the study of the region almost all, the Sati-Stones are belonged to Medieval Period. There are different types and testifying to the fact, that Sahagamana was widely practiced in the region.

The Sati or Mahasati stones are Classified into four types based on their nature and style. They are:

- 1 A pillar with a raised right hand.
- 2 A pillar with raised right hand and some scenes
- 3 Two raised hands with scenes
- 4 Scenes in the panels

The art history of these sati stones are studied below-

1. A pillar with a Raised Right Hand :

A pillar with right raised hand in the region under study of these types of sati stone are located at three places in the region. They are at Sadalaga and Mangaur in Chikodi taluka.

The Sadalaga sati stone is located in front of Hanuman temple. The sati-stone contains the depiction of a raised right hand attached to a raised right hand attached to long pillars in the middle part. It represents a woman that committed sati. On the top a Siva ling worships and the wife of the deceased standing in front of the Siva ling. The figures are shown in a simple manner. Stylistically it may be dated to C. 16th century A.D. The other sati stones of meager are similar to the first one.

2. A Pillar with Raised Right Hand and some Scenes :

A pillar with a raised right hand & scenes, sati-stones are located at Chinchani, Nainglaj, Mamdapur Savalgi and Bedkihal. The Chinchani sati-stone situated in Ramalingeshwar temple has a raised right hand attached to a pillar. In the lower part of the raised right hand male and female are seated with Dhyanamudra. Such types of sati-stones are found at Mangur Galataga in Chikodi taluak. In the sati-stone on it top Sivalinga is shown. The couples are shown. At its top bears the figure of sun and the moon

The Nainaglaj Sati-stone located near the Maruti temple consist of three panels'. Raised right hand is attached to the pillars which is beautifully ornamented. In the panel, the couples are seated. And in the middle panel the couples are worshipping Sivalinga. The upper most part is in triangular form.

The Mamdapur Sati-stone is depicted in a symbolic way. It has raised right hand attached to long pillars. Below the raised hand a small square box with small steps are attached to it. It has unique features. It represents fire-alter. It does not show the lying of the couple. On the upper part, the couples are worshipping a Sivaling.

The Savalagi sati-stone near the hanuman temple has a raised hand attached to the pillar the for part bears the figure of a hero and his wives on its upper part a priest is shown worshipping the Sivaling and a seated Nandi and sati are shown

The Bedkihal sati-stone fixed in the wall of a local Siddeshwar temple. It is very interesting. It has a pillar in its middle a raised right hand is attached on the pillars two square bands are depicted. On its top is ornamented in a form of a oval Kalasa. The figure of a Hero, who is seated on the back of the horse, is shown at the bottom of the panel and below the right arm. The couple seated in a Vimana is depicted between the pillar and a right raised hand over the arm. The Vimana has a Kalasa on its top and below a floral decoration is shown. On its top there are two Manatapas one over the top of the pillar and inside is a Sivalinga flanked by worshippers. On its right side, another Manatapa with a Seated couple. It may be noted that the former Manatapa has two pillars crowned by torana reminding the modern Vimana.

The details of pillars horse rider Sivaling Vimana with couples are beautifully depicted.

Stylistically it may be dated to C. 13th century A.D.

3. Two Raised Hands with Scenes :

This type of sati-stone is found only in one locality at Chichani. The Sati-stone is located in the Ramalingeshwar temple. The sati-stone has a pair of equal size raised hands of left and right and are very close to each other and are paralld and attached to a horizontal panel. At the base the war scene is depicted on it, two-horse rider are shown one against the other beside a soldier is also shown in the middle. The soldier is putting an bows over his head and held by his right hand is interesting. On the upper most part of the panel, the hero is seated with his two wives and all are worshipping a Siva-linga. It may be dated to C. 13th century A.D.

4. A Panel with Scenes :

These types of sati-stones are found at Sadalaga and at Pangeri. The Sadalaga sati-stone is erected in front of the Mahadev temple. The sati-stone consists of three panels. The lower parts bear the figures of couples and are seated. In between them a banana tree is shown which is interesting. In the upper part, a raised right hand attached with a pillar is shown. The pillar is ornamented. Two

squares and a Kalasa below the arms and above the horizontal panel are shown. A Sivalinga is surrounded by a semi-circular arch (torana). Pillars flank it. On the top of the sati-stone, the sun & moon are depicted. It is a rare sati-stone found in the region.

The Pangeri sati-stone consist of three panels. The lower panel bears the figures of four heroes standing in a single row. In the middle part, the right raised hand is shown at its half portion. A person standing at the right side of the raised hand and another is standing on the left side of the raised hand. On the top or the upper part, the Siva-linga is worhsipped by the hero. A seated Nandi is shown at the top. The depiction of the hero in a different way is indeed significant in the region. Stylistically the sati-stone may be dated to C. 13th century A.D.

Hero-Stone:

As the term indicates these stones are set up in memory of the deceased heroes who lost their lives in the battle, in the wars between the rival rulers, border disputes, or cattle lifting etc. The here-stone was used to be set up or erected in the place, to which the decreased heroes belonged, and they would express their appreciation & gratitude to such personalities this is un usual phenomenon in society. There are three hero-stones found at Sadalaga Chinchani and Mamdapur in the study region. The Sadalaga hero-stone consists four of panels. The lowest panel contains the infantry and elephant riders. Both are shown in equal proportion. The enemy side on its left the elephant riding by an attendant and the enemy seated on his back and holding a sword in his hand. The front legs of the elephant are folded behind and it is forward at the front side. Whereas at the right side the elephant rider is attached by the hero along with his soldiers. The hero is piercing his dagger to the head of the elephant. Over his head a bow probably held by his soldiers is shown. The figures of his other soldiers are broken.

In the second panel also war is seen. It bears in the right side some horse riders, a hero who perhaps lost his live and lying some soldiers on the ground and they are attached by a worrier by his arrow which is pierced is the stomach of the hero. On the left side of the margin a horse rider and some soldiers appearing to be running away from the war field. The representation of the middle part is very interesting. The third panel is divided into two parts by showing a pillar at the middle in which on the right side the figure of Chouribearers, a deceased hero and a garland bearers who buying and in the left side a dancer holding a garland, a deceased hero and dancer. On the top i.e. the fifty panel contains the couple setting before a Shivalinga and Yati on the other

side is worshipping the Shivalinga. The top portion is in semi circular. It may be dated to C. 12th century A.D.

The figures are shown in a realistic manner and well proportionate, besides in the war scenes all three type of warriors can be shown here. They are infantry, Cavalry and elephant riders. Two points are noteworthy in the scene. One in the middle part to some of the enemies are looking to be running back from the war and other in the fourth panel in two compartments the hero taken to heaven not either by sitting on the Vimana or by carrying by the Damsels.

The Chinchani hero-stone has also three panels with simple figure but with same interesting details. In the lowest panel, two heroes are standing & holding bows and arrows. Facing each other. Right one is appeared to be shooting the arrows, another has turned his head left side and holding his hands over the back in angoli form.

The Mamadapur hero-stone has also three panels. The lowest panel contains the cattle raiding. The cattle's are shown in a row vertically at the right margin. The hero is shown prominently, he is standing by holding sword and rectangular shield in his hand, and he looks like fighting with enemy. Who is associated with his Soldiers. The team of the enemy contains infantry and a horse-rider who is shown prominent in the team his infantry are holding sword & shield in their hands. In the second panel, same celestial nymphs in their arms are carrying the hero and they are flying on the sky.

In the upper panel, the deceased hero is seated in Anjalimudra before a Sivaling and a yati is worshipping the Sivalinga by standing at the left side. The figures of cattle shown here indicate the cattle raiding.

It may be noted to C. 12th century A.D.

The above-explained hero-stones excepting one belong to Shaiva affinity. Since on the top the deceased hero is seated before Sivalinga and Nandi

Nisidhis : The Nishidhis generally speaking, represent such structures as are constructed on the site where a follower of the Jaina faith died or where his memorials were cremated or buried. There are many instances also to assume that the Nishidhis refers to any construction or even on or near the epigraph. So we have to interpret the expression that the inscription itself is an Epitaph (i.e. words inscribed on tomb) and a memorial in the name of the deceased. The devotees or family members erected these Nishidhis as Parokshavinaya (a gesture of reverence

These are same hero-stone in which a Jina is shown on the top in front of the Jina, the deceased hero is seated. It indicates the devotee

belonging to Jaina. One of the hero-stones of the region has a feature of Jina. That is located in the Adinatha Basadi at Examba in Chikodi taluka of Belgaum district.

The term Nisidhis is a prakrit word called Nisidhia, Nisidhi. It is believed to indicate a place the term Nisidhi is usually used for indicating the memorial erected in honour to the person, who embraced death through sellekha. In Karnataka, large numbers of Nisidhis are found in different places at Nainglaj and Sadalaga. The village Nainglaj is 7 kms from Chikodi. Near the Hanuman temple a Nisidhi is located. It contains only a Jina. On the top is seated in Padamasana and Yogamudra. On the top of the corner sun and moon are shown. The lower part is buried in the ground. Another Nisidhi stone is noticed in Sadalaga. It has a platform with four corner pillars and capped by a dome to cover it. At the centre of the platform is an inscribed footprint the inscription is fully damaged nothing can be traced out now. It may be noted that every year on the first day of the Caitra month the Jainas and the non-Jainas of the place in a procession to the place and worship the foot prints of a Jainamuni.

The Nisidhi is located in the Adinatha Basadi consisting of three panels. The first or the lowest panel contains the battle scenes. The battle scene is shown with horse-rider the hero and the left sides are fighting with each other by holding usually long spears in the hands they are seated on the back of the horses it is shown prominently at centre. It may be noted that the royal insignia that is Chattri are shown on each of the heroes. They could be important officers of the regions some of the warriors falling down from the horse is shown. The whole depiction of the figures is more or less beautiful and interesting.

In the second panel the dancers Apasaras are carrying the deceased hero in their arms to heaven. On each side two Apasaras are shown. Their body is shown to be flying on the sky. Vimanans flank them. In the third panel the hero is seated in front of Jina and on the other side a Yati Jina is seated in Padmasana & Yogamudra. Female Churibearers flank the Jina. The Jina has three Chattri over his head Makaratorana surrounds the whole scene. There is an inscription carved in between the panel. It states that the death of Padevala Jina and senadhipati Dandanayaka Revana. The Mahamadalesvara of Bijjanadevarasa. These memorials reveal the custom and some aspects of socio-religious practices of the region. It is on borderland that there were some conflicts among the people and local chieftains their loyalty to the kings and devotion to the country. It reveals the bravery of

the people. Even today, many people of the region are in the service of the army. This is a land of bravery as evidenced by memorials through the ages. Belgaum is called as the cradle of Soldiers

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