

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

SRI SURYA PAHAR



Rock-cut Votive Stupas, Sri Suryapahar

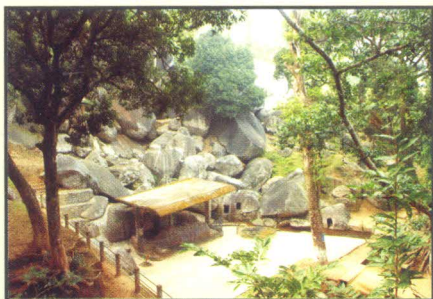


Rock-cut Sculpture Panel, Sri Suryapahar



प्रलकीर्तिमपावृणु

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA
GUWAHATI CIRCLE



Dasabhuja Devasthan

Sri Suryapahar

Assam is a land of rich archaeological heritage. Ancient relics have been discovered along the entire Brahmaputra valley. Sri Suryapahar in Goalpara

district of Assam is one such prominent archaeological site in the lower Brahmaputra Valley and is situated on the eastern slope of the Suryapahar hill amidst of a picturesque lush green ground. Historical record shows that Goalpara district was an integral part of ancient Kamarupa and throws light on the cultural history of ancient Assam.

'Sri Suryapahar' as the name implies, the site was perhaps associated with the 'sun worship'. Literary accounts corroborate that among other Brahmanical deities worshipped in ancient Assam, 'Surya' or 'Sun-God' occupied a prominent place in the cultural history of Assam. References are found in the 'Kalika Puran' about the two seats of 'Sun workshop' in ancient Assam. One of the centres is now identified as Sri Suryapahar in the Goalpara district of Assam bears the iconographic significance of the cult as well.

Numerous rock carvings of the Brahmanical pantheon can be seen at the foothills of Sri Suryapahar and its adjacent areas. Notable among them are the sculptural panels of Siva and Vishnu, carved under a twelve handed 'Vishnu' figure in standing posture under a canopy of snakehood. Other notable carvings are the Ganesha, Harihara, rock-cut Sivalingas, Vishnupadas, rock-cut caves etc. on granite outcrops. Most of the Brahmanical figures appear in the niches and the carved figures are assigned to circa ninth century AD.



Rock-cut Twelve Armed Vishnu

Sri Suryapahar

Here one stone slab contains the carvings in the circular form. The central figure is identified as *Prajapati* carved inside an inner circle while the surrounding outer circle is in the form of twelve lotus petals.



Dwadasa Aditya Pannel

Sri Suryapahar

Each lotus petal has the seated figure of an Aditya. These twelve Adityas are infact twelve 'solar-divinities' viz. Dharti, Mitra, Aryamān, Rudra, Varuna, Sūrya, Bhaga, Vivāsvan, Pushān, Savitri, Tvastri and Vishnu. Therefore 'sun worship' at Sri Suryapahar can be attested with the iconographic representation too.

Vestiges of Buddhist relics in the form of rock-cut votive stupās at Sri Suryapahar are highly significant as it is commonly



Rock-cut Votive Stupa

Sri Suryapahar

believed that the Buddhism was not prevalent in the cultural history of Ancient Kamarupa. The rock-cut votive stupās are shaped in various sizes lying in the hill appear to be archaic in shapes, designed in the form of hemispherical drum except one stupa hewn out in the form of cylindrical drum. The archaic nature of the carvings show that the stūpās at Sri Suryapahar were hewn during the Hināyāna phase of Buddhism and assigned to the early Christian era. Further development of the faith in the later phases could not be seen at the site although the neighbouring territories of Bihar and Bengal witnessed the later phases of Mahayana and Vajrayana esotericism.

Remains of Jaina affiliations in the form of inscription and rock-carvings are assigned to ninth century AD. The two figures carved in a big granite boulder are in low relief. The figures are shown in standing posture with their hands



Jaina Images
Sri Suryapahar

hanging down to the knees and their cognisance are shown below the figures in low relief. Another figure carved at the top of the hill is identified as 'Adinath'. The figure is carved in sitting posture in the rocky outcrop and two bulls are marked at the base, the mark of cognisance of the first Tirthankara.

Recent excavations yielded two temple complexes alongwith large number of antiquities which

range from sixth to twelfth century AD. One of them is the brick

temple complex originated in north-south directions. This rectangular enclosure (26.80 x 17.80m) walls enclosed the remains of several brick



Excavated Temple Remains
Sri Suryapahar

structures including the sanctum sanctorum and porch built in three sub-structural phases. Antiquities found from the site are mainly terra-cotta tiles and plaques.

The other temple complex is located near the ancient tank. This stone temple complex is found, within a quadrangular brick



Excavated temple remains
Sri Suryapahar



Terra-cotta Female Figurine
Sri Suryapahar

side of the kund.

Archaeological Survey of India has exhibited most of the antiquities unearthed from the excavation, and displayed at the site museum. Antiquities are mostly of terra-cotta but a few stone carvings and sculptures found from the site are also displayed. Some of the important exhibited antiquities among the stone sculptures are the images of Mahisāsūramardini, Gajasimha, stela fragment depicting the Vidhyadharas and Kīrtimukha. Among the terra-cottas notable are plaques of the human figures, mythical animal, Kīrtimukhas, āmalaka fragment, decorated lion head, moulded fish, decorated bricks, tiles of floral and geometric designs are remarkable. The central gallery of the site museum is provided with wall paintings depicting the cultural settings on the background of Sri Suryapahar hill.

The remains at Sri Suryapahar provides us the vestiges of three principal religions of India viz. Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain. Relics of these three principal religions can be seen at Sri Suryapahar from the early centuries of the Christian era and flourished as the centre of Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain faith like that of Ellora of western India.

enclosure. The sanctum sanctorum of the temple complex is located on the eastern side of the complex. There are four subsidiary shrines within the temple complex. Notable discovery from the area is the sculpture of Mahisāsūramardini, Ganesha and a few stone architectural members. Another discovery from the site is a small water tank popularly known as 'Ganesh Kund'. A long water channel is existing on the eastern

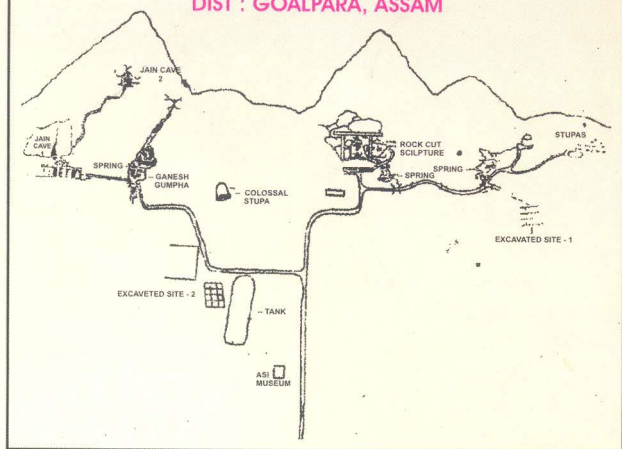


Mahisāsūramardini
Sri Suryapahar

“The Archeological monuments in India are for variety, extent, completeness and beauty unsurpassed, perhaps unequalled in the world.”

(Alexander Cunningham 1861)

**SITE PLAN OF SRI SURYAPAHAR
DIST : GOALPARA, ASSAM**



TOURIST INFORMATION

The Site Remains open to Visitors from Sunrise to Sunset
Museum Open from 08.00 a.m. to 05.00 p.m.
Friday Holiday

DO'S

1. Help in Maintaining the Monuments neat and clean.
2. Keep distance from show cases of antiquities.
3. Help in creating awareness about Cultural Property.
4. Help in maintenance of the holiness and sanctity of Living Monuments.

DO NOT'S

1. Don't engrave or write names, date of visit and friend's names over the Monuments.
2. Don't throw away Plastic or Paper wastes.
3. Don't allow the children to climb on the monuments.
4. Don't touch the paintings.
5. Don't stand keeping the leg or hand supporting monument walls or Paintings.
6. Don't use Flash cameras on paintings.
7. Don't wipe the monument walls or Pillars with oily Hands.

**Ancestors passed on this cultural Property,
maintain it for Posterity.**

Government of India
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