

# DAMODAR VALLEY CIVILIZATION

The first report on the discovery  
of an ancient and living civilization in the valley of the river Damodar,  
Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, India



**Bulu Imam**

**2001**



**Sanskriti Publishing**



**Frontispiece**

Shiva-Parvati, Sekha-Barasi  
(1<sup>st</sup> cent. A.D.)

# DAMODAR VALLEY CIVILIZATION

**Bulu Imam**



Published by  
SANSKRITI PUBLISHING  
Sanskriti, Dipugarha  
Hazari bagh 825301  
Jharkhand  
India

Distributed by  
Sanskriti Publishing

Copyright © Bulu Imam  
2000

All rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system without prior permission in writing from the publishers.

ISBN- 81-88128-00-7

Typeset and designed by  
Gustav Imam  
At Sanskriti Press  
Hazari bagh 825301



*The sacred grove or sarna – all which is left when the forest is gone. Even these today are under attack by destructive development.*



*Adivasi dance, Sanskriti*



## INTRODUCTION

It is certain that the technology revolution which we are currently witnessing will destroy scholarship and humanism in their fundamental essence. It is easy to bring an advanced technology to an undeveloped, even primitive, people, but it must never be forgotten that it is an imposition and not an evolution of the society. This is why whenever the industrialism and capitalism of Europe have been forced upon egalitarian and non technological tribal societies they have adapted but succumbed to it through side effects, virus and epidemics, both of bodies and minds. It has invariably sapped the strength of these societies while promising upliftment and taken away their cultural identity. We may like to look at the neatly printed page which comes out of the modern computer as an achievement. It is, but not of scholarship. It is an achievement of technology, not scholarship, to be precise. The industrial world is totally dependant upon technology for the survival of its systems, and even a moderately intelligent sample of human can operate technology, robots for example. This has been realized as a manpower saving device in industry. It does not require scholarship to survive. Even technological development does not require scholarship, but is able to grow upon the chemistry of logic. Scholarship on the other hand belongs to an altogether different element.

The hand-written word on paper is no less vital to the advance of human society than the beautifully printed word which comes from a computer. We have become artlessly mesmerized by the “beauty of the printed word”, but forget that we should not judge a book by its cover. We have forgotten the true hidden power and depth of scholarship. We have made a false god out of technology both in the office and in our daily lives forgetting the soul lies outside form, and that the technology will be quickly outdated. There is nothing original in the machine. Everything of importance is outside its scope.

The history of our race is dependant not upon technology as much as scholarship -- that unacknowledged primitive scholarship which preserved the oral tradition of the tribes that became the Vedas for thousands upon thousands of years and kept them alive until they could be written. The same kind of oral scholarship continues even today across the length and breadth of tribal India kept by the societies whom the educated world calls illiterate and backward. They do not stop to consider that these so-called illiterate traditions are the marrow of the history of our race. They do not realize that oral traditions alone have preserved the memory of our race. What is in the genes is only what has first been encoded in the mind, and that is encoded in the mind that has been carried forward by racial memory. The machine which created the printed word is less than five hundred years old whereas the history of oral traditions goes back to the first cry of our race on the planet. The undertaking of the history and culture of a people is not the work of a machine but the work of the mind. Each superior civilization gifts to posterity this gift of the mind. Today many scholars feel machines are an aid to scholarship but I do not agree with this because I have been reading research done by some of these scholars and find basic flaws in their understanding of archetypes --- the Big Picture -- against which the facts collated by a machine are impotent. Truth is an altogether higher dimensions which challenges the search for its mansions in heavens where scholarship alone may dare to follow. Such discretion is the privileged domain of the scholar to judge between one opinion and another. A machine may prove either paradigm correct. Sending a man to the moon or Mars or Venus is not a work of scholarship but of science and technology. In India the greatest achievements have traditionally been in the realm of

scholarship. Scholarship is the science of the mind. It uses the technologies of the human intelligence centered in the brain. Its technologies are rudimentary, but helps in carrying forward the knowledge of elapsed time as tradition to help future generations. Man is still not able to fully appreciate the nature of what other forms of intelligence or life may be. It is the final frontier to understand what is beyond man's understanding. Technology will never help man to understand this. Man will find this through his own higher consciousness. I have written at such length on the poles of scholarship and oral literature versus technology and the printed word at such length to prepare the reader for a search into the pre-modern consciousness of this new tribal state.

In my assessment of the background of Jharkhand I have kept in sight the older traditions, the relicts of its forgotten past, which speak of a forgotten glory and heritage which the area once possessed before it was abused by modernism. Today it is the subject of exploitation by a nation turned suddenly young in its hoary age. The European and American error of treating natural wealth as capital is now with our planners. This loss is a loss not only of the state, but of the nation and the world. Jharkhand, should I say Chotanagpur --- because Jharkhand omits the tribal areas of Jamui and Banka, and could in the past be said to have encompassed Sundargarh, Sambalpur and Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj in Orissa, Midnapore, Purulia and Bankura in Bengal constituting P.R.Sarkar's Golden Rarh. Since the Britishers began mining this coal-rich region, blessed with other unparalleled mineral resources, it has been feeding the furnaces of industry. Shamelessly this exploitation has continued for over a century in the valley of the Damodar river and today threatens to utterly destroy its upper valley. I have taken up the pen of discontent thirteen long years back, and I will sign this Introduction with the same sorrow. In shameless continuance of this wasteful and unwarranted exploitation Jharkhand, earlier Chotanagpur, has been raped by each successive government for its minerals, especially coal. This was politically justified as economic and rural development in a region defined as poor and backward. In fact the tribal peasantry has always been well off, but it was forcibly displaced, deprived, its social organization destroyed through big dams and vast mines in the valley of the Damodar. The forests and rice-fields, the sustenance and succour of the tribal people, was thoroughly destroyed and this can be seen from the forest graph of Manbhum which has fallen in the past 65 years from 65 percent forests to 0.5 percent forests. Agricultural lands and hundreds of tribal villages were erased alongwith vast forest corridors throughout the Damodar Valley area in Hazaribagh. The hundreds and thousands of displaced tribal families had to search out subsistence employment in the big towns and cities as coolie labour. Women were degraded and children abused. During the Sixties this rush to the cities was put down to the lust for urbanization and the great god of western capitalism by western trained sociologists, especially American. This rush was due to displacement. These people were remnants of forcibly displaced tribal societies, just as the widows of the sons of Dhrita-rashtra fled the wailing gates of Hastinapur. These stragglers once sent east fled in all directions throughout the verdant forested river valleys of India where industrialism entered. A recent example of this ongoing strategy of forced displacement is the Narmada Dam. The exploitation during the Sixties which I have described was identical to that being currently masterminded by the small, urban, western educated non tribal intelligentsia to line their own nests. As Europe robbed the gold of the Americas so too did Third World countries get robbed by their own leadership and merchant class.

Today we require to carefully look at the lessons of our past. The so-called technological dream for modern Jharkhand must not be allowed to run out of hand. The fundamental flaws of following outdated European and American ideas in a largely primitive region require planning and restraint. It is therefore more than ever important to assess our region's heritage. It is not going to be easy to justify the big destructive development plans for the new tribal state. The tribal in the creative process of social evolution has to be seen in a dynamic rather than stagnant perspective. Evolution is a largely creative and adaptive process whereby the genius of a particular society survives. Peoples and entire societies and civilizations have to be given the chance for evolving creatively out of their own genius and social responsibility. If not, such a chance requires to be given. In societies which are old and established such adaptation is naturally constructed as long as it is in accordance with the creative will of a particular people. Design contains energy, and all palaeolithic societies were aware of the connection between the physical and psychic, hence their preoccupation with such magico-religious phenomena as the megaliths, of which Hazaribagh has a fair share. In our modern times we face new paradigms, perhaps ones never before faced by the human race. For example space-age technologies being thrust on palaeolithic societies. Again I warn of what Leon Trotsky wrote in his History of the Russian Revolution, "Savages throw away their bows and arrows for rifles all at once, without traveling the road which lay between those two weapons in the past."

In writing of this essay on the civilization of tribal peoples in Hazaribagh and its environs on the evidence of archaeology and folklore I will like to dispel the common notion that there is a progressive civilizational journey from simple societies to very complex societies. I describe, rather, the evolution of self-contained tribal groups, both along the heavily brahminised Gangetic and Brahmaputra valleys, and the forest regions of the Chakmas and Santals in the Northeast and Jharkhand. Examples are to be found in both groups unchanged for millennia, besides complex agricultural societies long since brahminized but still holding onto aboriginal worship patterns, and simple subsistence farmers such as the Ganjus, craftsmen like Turi basket makers, or trappers like the nomadic Birhor. The notion of evolution as a singular linear progression has long ago been disproven. The Aryan conquest over rural India is sought to be shown as a political and religious masterminding of social forces and the politics of control, although modern establishment historians propound the Aryan invasion a myth, which is even more dangerous for secular India. The tribal history, the history of the Kuru peoples and those who fought against the Aryans in the Bharata war, survives only in scattered folk tales, and unless a concerted attempt is made to collect and collate all these materials under a common heading in the form of the Mahabharata, till then there can never be a fitting account of tribal history in India. This material evidence I am convinced exists. As Sri Aurobindo warned "The first effect of this entry of a new and quite opposite civilization (is) the destruction of much that had no longer the power to live... A new activity (comes) in but this (is) at first crudely and confusedly imitative of the foreign culture. It (is) a crucial moment and an ordeal of perilous severity... History shows us how disastrous this situation can be to nations and civilizations."

In the peaceful sylvan rural countryside of Hazaribagh and Ranchi plateau and their idyllic surrounds we face the forces of new political will and international market forces over which corporate actors dictate their terms and about which the peasant farmer in his fields or the labourer in a coal mine knows nothing whatsoever. Today Jharkhand sleeps under a Damocles Sword whereby corporate interests must dictate political will. Such corporate



interests come from the most powerful nations in the world like Japan, Canada and America. We have lost sight of the fact that all life on the planet is plant-dependant, and that all plants are water and air dependant. The clouding of the atmosphere and the destruction of the forests has destroyed both groundwater and rainwater. The guidance of the tribal intelligentsia is lost in the pleasure garden of the senses reveling in the sudden joys of a technocracy which may well remain barren in the new state. To kowtow to the western corporate interests will be the living death of the state. Tribals are able to understand and interpret nature as something living and more than timber for chairs and tables, paper, or coal for thermal power stations. They can understand nature as living, sentient, a godhood and the living mother goddess, an aspect of Mahapurusha or Brahman. All ancient societies understood this divine aspect of nature as part of the cosmic personality. As far back as the megalithic age seven thousand years ago man understood this. Even as far back as Neanderthal Man thirty thousand years ago this was understood This was realized by tribal societies. Upon it grew the fruits of the Vedas and the Vedanta. In the culture of Harappa the mother goddess was represented by various fig trees and the male deity by the buffalo. The twist of fate was that the goddess sought the assistance of the Assyrian lion to subdue the tribal buffalo . Mahesh Asura, the demon god of the tribals was under attack from within. This work explores the landscape of the Asura in Jharkhand.

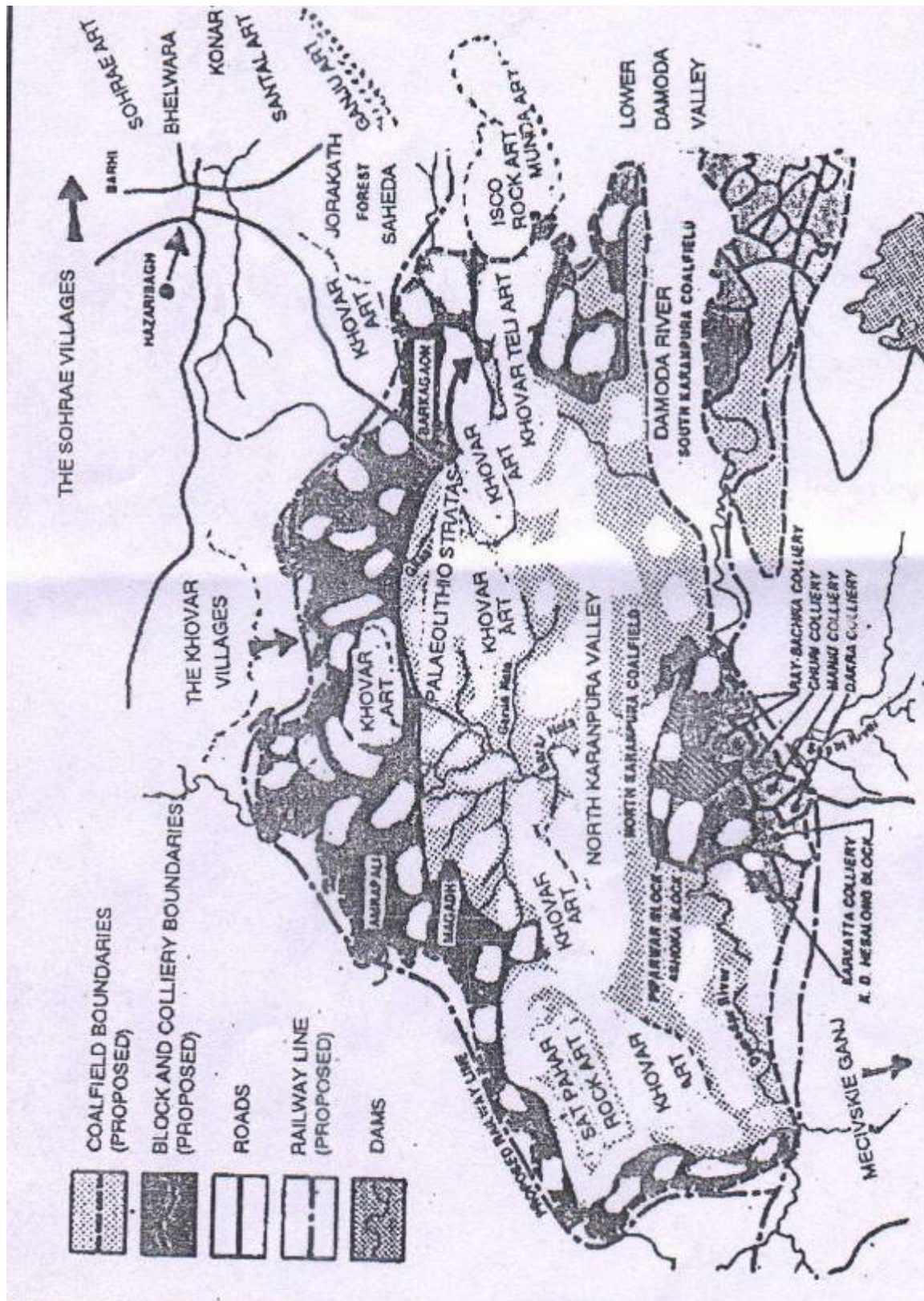
On a final note, to clear any misunderstandings, I will reiterate my thoughts on the status of this country as an existing civilization in a high state of preservation. Some have sought to show India as a highly developed country in an advanced state of decay. India's greatest civilizational achievement has been non-attachment, which is being above materialistic values, and which is being sought to be shown as decadence by modern western-style scholarship. I totally disagree. The modern definition of civilization is an old one extolling the glory of power and state machinery, police, army, prisons, and instruments of suppression of diverse resilient cultural and ethnic groups, and this standard is as old as ancient Egypt. But are these the trappings of a really high civilization? The highest evidence of a civilization are not great monuments built with the use of slave labour, but the flowering of a hidden nucleous, through manifold diversity coordinated by a single purpose, as in the flowering of a plant or ecosystem. The civilization of India has survived five thousand years of foreign aggression and intimidation yet its original, ageless, and uncorroded institutions of village governance, and rural peace ,amidst a high level of spirituality equal to anything in the world, stands till today the fairest flower in the history and prehistory of the civilized world, towering above Egypt and Sumeria, Greece and Rome, as a manifestation of our living culture in all its manifold diversity, what Jawaharlal Nehru called, " Unity in diversity." This living diversity is what must be preserved as our record for posterity.

Sanskriti  
Hazaribagh  
Jharkhand, 13 December, 2000

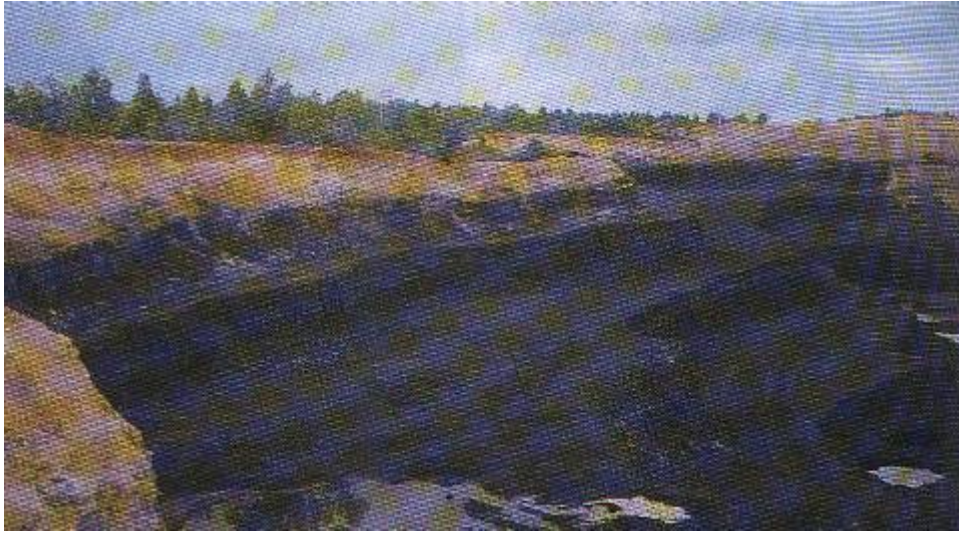
Bulu Imam



Map showing the proposed opencast coal mines in the North Karanpura Valley in the catchment of river Damodar in Hazaribagh amidst the Khovar and Sohrai villages which the mines will destroy, and the vast wildlife corridors of tiger and elephant which will be destroyed also, breaking connectivity between Hazaribagh and Palamau jungles. This region is thick with sacred sites, rockart sites, megalithic sites, and palaeolithic habitation sites of Early Man.







*a) Illustration of Piperwar Opencast Mine*



*(b) Virgin Satpahar Range*

## Damodar Valley Civilization

The earliest record of Jharkhand, known to the Moguls as Shikarbhum or Kukrah, and Hazaribagh, and known to the British as the Junglebury district comes from twin sources --- first from the archaeological record, and second, from the oral traditions of the aboriginal peoples that have inhabited the region since earliest prehistoric times. The historical narrative is recent, based on biased scholarship, British or Christian missionary interpretations and definitions, and constitutes a warped view of reality from the point of view of traditional aboriginal or adivasi interests of the region. It continues along similar lines upto the present time. Surajit Sinha, the eminent anthropologist, had held that the tribes of middle India, from the hilly forests of the Deccan plateau to the jungled fastnesses of Jharkhand and Birbhum in Bengal constituted the scene of primary levels of Indian civilization (1950). Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar had held around the same time that regions of the Damodar-Suvarnarekha plain from Parasvanath to Purulia and Singhbhum were habitations of Early Man and a continuous developing civilization in Bengal which he named Rarh, and the western portions, underlying the ramparts of the Chotanagpur plateau, Western Rarh. These constituted the districts of Murshidabad, Birbhum, Bankura, Purulia, Dhanbad, Giridih, Gola-Peterbar, Bokaro, Bundu, Tamar, Singhbhum, South Midnapore, and which bore traces of the presence of the rise of man from its most primitive past. (P.R.Sarkar, Starting Point of Civilization/*Sabhitya Adi Vindu Rarh*, 1949). The P.R.Sarkar collection of prehistoric stone artefacts ranging from the Middle Palaeolithic to the Late Stone Age is housed partly in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, and the Ananda Marga Office, Bokaro. The eminent archaeologist, H.D.Sankalia had also upheld the prehistoric antiquity of Madhya Pradesh, particularly in the Raipur-Bastar region.

It is of note that the Harappan civilization has been totally appropriated by the Aryan and that no mention is made of a Pre-Harappan Civilization although it is accepted that Harappa and Mohenjodaro were existing before the arrival of the Aryan. It is the thesis of the present work to bring before the reader the evidence of a civilization of which Harappa and Mohenjodaro were a part, and this we have called the Damodar Valley Civilization. Sir John Marshall in 1925 had predicted the foundation of the Harappan Civilization would be found in Middle India. The researches by the present writer have established the presence of Palaeolithic to Neolithic man in the upper Damodar valley (Imam, Bridal Caves, INTACH, New Delhi, 1995). It is geologically evidenced that the Jharkhand region is far older than the Himalayas, and pebbled shorelines in upper river valleys such as the Barkagaon Valley (also now known as the North Karanpura Valley, after the disastrous North Karanpura Coalfields Project) on the first fortyfive kilometres of the young river Damodar in Hazaribagh, indices the levels attained during glacial icemelts in the past – perhaps as recently as the last glaciation around 10,000 BC. It also evidences the appearance of man half a million years back in the form of a horsehoof hammerstone dated on patination by Shri S.B.Ota, Director, Department of Prehistory, Archaeological Survey of India, Nagpur, to 450,000 BC (1994). Further evidence is found through pebble chopper tools both single and biface along this pebbled shoreline, at a period perhaps antecedent to the horsehoof hammerstone and even as far back as a million years old and related with *Ramapithecus* man the contemporary of *Australopithecus* discovered in the 1950s in the Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania in East Africa. I have drawn to the attention of the academic community earlier that the Rift Valley region of Olduvai presents a Pleistocene level commensurate with the Pleistocene of the Narmada valley in India. This seems to be a prehistoric connection during continental

drift periods before these two landmasses were completely separated. It is believed that man was developing fire as far back as half a million years back, and it is generally believed that the species had already developed human characteristics witnessed in Neanderthal man, which would eventually develop into *Homo Sapiens*. However, at the time of this referred to horsehoof hammerstone man was still very much *Homo habilis*, or handyman. In the scarp of the Hazaribagh plateau, still moving northward under pressure from the southern side due to plate tectonics, a strata has been revealed dating back to the early Pleistocene in which we find the true record of antiquity offered by the North Karanpura valley in terms of both geologic time, as well as the appearance of man, since the sixty million year-old carboniferous deposit of thirteen billion tones of coal presently speculated in the valley being hungrily eyed by multinational exploiters, had sunk along with the dinosaurs, and is the parallel of the famous Olduvai gorge in the Rift Valley in east Africa. I have found that the pebble choppers referred to are from a level commensurate with plateau scarp erosion, and at a hundred feet depth below the present level of the Hazaribagh plateau, which I have called Bed II since there is an even lower level which would be Bed I, and would reveal the earliest humanoid evidence. Taking that the pressure of continental drift caused at the rate of five centimetres a year caused an up thrust of five inches of soil per year the present level would have been reached in one million years. That the pebbled shoreline might be evidence of a glacial lake as recently as ten thousand years back confirms this strata as being of an older level. The stone tools collected by me from the North Karanpura valley and its environs are presently housed in my personal museum in Hazaribagh. P.R.Sarkar was of the opinion that Rarh was very ancient, and that no older human evidence or habitat had been discovered in the region and that the forest growth came over the rocky regions of metamorphosed and igneous rocks while the alluvial soil presented a roothold. He believed that these forests catered for the human settlements which he thought would have developed around rivers controlled by precipitation levels caused by the emerging forests, and that the forested hills around would have provided habitat for the animals, whence the first source of viable protein would have helped man to develop to higher levels. It was a highly plausible scene and one might like to picture it. The early ice ages were past along with the dinosaurs when this figure of human life occurred in the *lower* Damodar valley. Sarkar had no idea of the palaeolithic ancestry of the upper Damodar, which, like the upper cataracts of the Nile river, present a totally more prehistoric definition of human life. Coupled with the fact that Acheulian type handaxes from the middle palaeolithic period have been found on the surface in the levels of the pebble chopper tools, we might be looking at a scenario in which continental drift and its resultant erosion and raising of the scarp would lay bare a million years of human prehistory alongside fifty thousand year-old handaxes around the level of Bed-II described.

The ancient tract or forested plateau called in ancient times Chotanagpur, on which Hazaribagh stands was known to the earliest outsiders as *Kukra*. It is not known whether the Chotanagpur region accepted the suzerainty of the great Asura King Jarasandha of Magadha in the Ganges Valley, but it is unlikely. From here begins the conventional modern history of Chotanagpur from the time of the Mauryan empire at the time of Ashoka Maurya (273-232 BC), but very little can be said about the state of the region before this. Some punch mark coins of the Mauryan period have been brought to light in Ichak a town of many old temples, just twelve kilometers North of the present town of Hazaribagh. For purposes of definition I would like to quote from the Digest of Old English Correspondence from Hazaribagh- "A very old map found in a file of 1876 shows the trade of Chotia Nagpur division comprising the districts of Lohurdaga, Hazaribagh, Manbhum, and Singhbhum with the tributary estates

of Chang-Bhakar, Korea, Sarguja, Jaspur, Udaipur, Gangpur and Bonai under the jurisdiction of the Lt. Governor of Bengal.” From this we shall note that certain states now in Orissa came within the province of Bengal of which Chotanagpur was a part. I refer the reader interested in detached study to P.C.Roy Choudhury’s- 1. Sepoy mutiny in Chotanagpur, 2. Hazaribagh old Records 1761-1878 and 3. Bihar District Gazetteers-Hazaribagh,1957 as well as H.Rickett’s report of 1855, Digest of Old English Correspondence from Hazaribagh,1851, Capt. Simpson’s Journal 1851-53. In the present work I would like to altogether break to new researches and try to present a glimpse of the region which has not as yet been presented by record keepers or research scholars.

The Santal Hound is the small brown pariah dog of the Indian subcontinent, its motley villages and towns, and found among the tribals from the Benders of Mysore to the Santals of Hazaribagh (from which they are given their name), who use them for hunting as partners. The breed has been recognized in the United States of America by the Primitive and Aboriginal Dog Society (PADS) A mixture of Spitz being found is common. Such dogs are direct descendants of the small grey Indian wolf *Canis lupus* and the original breed of all dogs perhaps. DNA sampling has shown the Santal Hound to be of similar genes as the Polynesian dogs as well as the Australian Dingo. Such dogs are the prototype for the Egyptian jackal deity Anubis, and adorn the frescoes and relief carvings of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. Similar forms of the dog are found in the Ganju painting of Hazaribagh, a notable example being the Anubis painted by Putli Ganju, and the double dog contest motif painted by this same artist identical to the handle of the knife of Gebel-el-Arak carved in the Sumerian style in Upper Egypt (3000 BC). The Ganjus seem to be a sister tribe to the Copts of the Upper Nile. These Copts had been the artists of ancient Egypt. The Santal Hound and its ilk correspond with the Banjara and other Indian gypsy dogs and their traces may be found as far off as Europe. It is of note that similar dogs take part in traditional summer hunts in Spain at the same time as these hunts with dogs take place among the Santals in India, and conform to similar patterns. The bullfights of Spain may similarly be traced to similar traditions found in the harvest bullfight at Sohrai in the Hazaribagh villages.

The scene when naked hunter-gatherer aboriginal tribes roamed Hazaribagh is still close at hand in the semi-clad, leaf-dwelling Birhors who still haunt these forests with their nets and traps, escaping the clutches of the forest department. Their forebears left evidence of their passage through stone tools found throughout the hilly ranges and the scarps of North Karanpura valley overlooking the tranquil Damodar. Such a primitive civilization had existed along the Sone, Narmada, Cauvery, Mahanadi, and other Indian rivers no doubt. In the words of the famous Jesuit palaeontologist, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin,” The Narmada ranks as the classic Pleistocene of India.”( 18<sup>th</sup> Dec, 1935) (Quoted in Claude Cuenot, *Teilhard de Chardin, a Biographical Study*, Burns & Oats, London 1965, p.188). However, the fate of the Narmada was sealed by a big dam, just as the fate of the Damodar valley was sealed by Nehru’s vision for the mining and industrialization we witness today. I would like to describe a very early scene along the pebbled shoreline of a lake whose “pebbles” were belonging to a period perhaps a million years old, and contained the fossils of Early Man. Undoubtedly, in this same level the lake which I have spoken of during the melting of the last glaciation, revealed a new stone culture at work. In the bare hillsides were the remains of their ancestors, the broad blades of Acheulian handaxes and the various hammer stones and flakes of their production. To man in this valley ten thousand years ago a tradition had been left which he could not refuse to utilize because his very survival depended upon it. If one



studies the shape and contour of the Chotanagpur plateau one finds evidence to believe that in some past period it was surrounded by seas. Such a face is found along the lower valley of the Damodar along Hazaribagh plateau overlooking the Bokaro river. The Rarh scenario in which P.R.Sarkar worked could have been of a more recent time in this region and presents a directly contiguous level to the developments of the North Karanpura valley which I am describing in the period around 50,000 to 10,000 years ago. The landscape of antique Jharkhand was the starting point of civilized man in the region and in the present context of its unbroken continuity down to the present reveals a priceless evidence of sociocultural evolution through the millennia. This ancient civilization, or should we say “process of civilization”, entails a journey of advancing complexity in concordance with the idea of development as *Homo sapiens sapiens* had begun to conceive it.

Chotanagpur is on the oldest Acheulian geologic strata and this is one of the oldest rocky beds on this planet. In the context of human evolution, in the words of leading anthropoarchaeologist Dr.D.K.Bhattacharya of Delhi University, with regard to Acheulian stone tool culture (ACHEULIAN: a stage of culture 2,50,000 years old, and characterized specifically by symmetrical stone handaxes as found in Upper Damodar Valley in medium-sized handaxes and cleavers. Cylinder hammerstones typical of this period have also been found. This period is parallel to the European Lower Palaeolithic age, and the term Acheulian comes from a small village in northern France named St.Acheul from where this stone tool culture was first classified) Dr Bhattacharya has noted, “ The Chotanagpur region of Bihar and northern Orissa is replete with Acheulian tools found in association with flakes and blades formed out of a variety of raw materials. Seen in this light, one can perhaps point out the rise of ‘cultural regions’ in India for the first time. Thus, while Chotanagpur acts as a separate region, the Gangetic Vindhya maintain their typical Central Indian features.” (Dr.D.K.Bhattacharya, *An Outline of Indian Prehistory*, Fifth Edition, Palaka Prakashan, Delhi, 1996, p.209). According to Dr.Bhattacharya, upto 1,50,000 BP India remained largely uninhabited. The small populations at that time lived in isolation in bands along hill and river valleys in north, central, south and Chotanagpur-Jharkhand-Northeast regions. Northeast region was typical of Southeast Asian culture. Thus, from a study of the archaeological graph of prehistoric India we find in the upper Damodar Valley (or , North Karanpura Valley, named after the small village of North Karanpura on north bank of river Damodar), the microlithic industry of the last ice age (around 10,000 BP) which may be defined as the immediately pre-Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) period, occurred; next we have a microlithic culture which follows of the period commensurate with the Black and Red Ware (BRW) pottery culture; then the earliest metal age in copper, leading to bronze and iron; and then we find the megalith age with its huge memorial stones, and the emergence of the nomadic hunter gatherers turning into agriculturists, and the continuing phenomenon until quite recent times. The evolution of society is not linear as we well understand in India, but complex and cyclic, multi-levelled and in which our true perspective of the rise and collapse of successive civilizations is in tune with the cosmological interpretations, and long precedes such western notions as proposed by modern historians such as Arnold Toynbee. Even as we can today find societies as diverse as the nomadic Birhors, the Mohammedans, the Kurmis, all sharing the same space, or as in the case of the Sangria Paharias of the Rajmahal Hills who practice shifting cultivation, in interaction with lowland village groups, we find examples of vastly differing evolutionary levels existing together on the same timescale, nor should it be surprising.



*Birhor hunter with nets*



*Birhor woman, Danua*



*Birhor tanda or settlement of leaf houses called kumbas, Sijhwa*

The history of the tribes is a very personal one documented in their oral traditions and requires a separate book devoted to the work and those interested in it may refer to my other writings on the documentation of tribal folklore and song. In these stories the real diverse histories of the local tribes of our Jharkhand and erstwhile Chotanagpur region are seen to emerge in clearly defined historical patterns. All along in this region and in northern Orissa a similar hunter-gatherer economy lasted until the Mauryan period when the usage of iron axes felled large tracts of forests in the Gangetic valley, and on the Hazaribagh and Ranchi plateau, and here we see in this massive clearfelling of forests to make way for agriculture and villages mainly by the Oraon, Munda, and Santal tribes, the establishment of the first felling rights to ownership of the lands on ancestral basis called the *Khuntkatti* rights. This long historical period of our protohistoric aboriginal forebears in Chotanagpur does not offer a novel dimension since these early conditions are seen to persist even until the present times today when primitive leaf-dwelling nomadic hunter-gatherer tribes like the Birhor persist, and our historical perspective must shift to a new and larger dimension, neither linear nor cyclic, but based upon perennial foundations. As if imbedded in a constellation of events our view of the real nature of time will become productive of a complete understanding. This is the real perception of the imperceptibly slow flow of real time and the nature of our cultural evolution, as opposed to the fast leaps of so-called civilization catalogued by western historians and which are meaningless, being mere shadows, having no substance.

In India the European and African type of stone tools have been found as far back as 100,000 years later than in those places, meaning that our primitiveness remained pristine much, much longer. Here the conflict between North African Cro Magnon Man with European Neanderthal Man never took place and the tropical Neanderthal survived in isolation. Thus layers dated around 25,000 years back here will be over 100,000 years old in those places. This does not mean, however, that man had appeared later in South Asia as some biased authorities like to infer, or that our human societies all migrated here from the west --- it only means that in South Asia man continued his stonecraft longer, that is all. On the other hand, the development of such advanced technologies as rice farming, pottery making, copper and stone tools in the Neolithic, later bronze working and iron making came comparatively at later stages in many parts of the society. There is a fictitious trend among scholars to try and show in absence of largescale evidence to the contrary due to inadequate research, that the microlithic culture had entered India from the west which is sheer nonsense, since the establishment of a firm palaeolithic is unquestioned. The microlithic is merely a later development of the palaeolithic. The microlith culture is very advanced, and evident, in the Vindhyan series, and every rockshelter or Khovar containing rockart will yield microliths in this region right down to Jharkhand. It is increasingly recognized that human anthropology developed in isolation across the early world despite culture contacts and migrations. Mirzapur rockart sites continue along the eastern limits of the Vindhyan ranges through the Mesolithic cultures in Jharkhand and the Chotanagpur Plateau in particular. In the Hazaribagh region microliths have been found in the Isco rockshelter and in the other rockart sites of the North Karanpura or Upper Damodar valley, in association with coarse coiled and wheel turned pottery, both red and also black ware. Ring-stones, iron slag, Black & Red Ware (BRW) has also been found on the surface in the adjoining areas of these sites and is consistent with the findings of Burdwan, Bankura, Purulia. It was during the Neolithic period that man became sedentarized and a new form of life appeared, different from the earlier ages. Yet at the same time stoneage pre-agricultural societies continued to flourish, and such a phenomenon may be seen in the present primitive tribes such as the nomadic

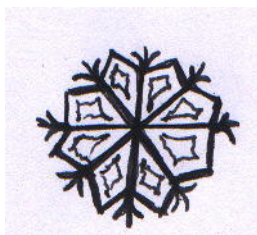
Birhor in Hazaribagh. That societies may even oscillate back from so-called “developed” state to the primitive has been shown from studies of the effect of the Boer on the Bushman in the Namibian Kalahari desert in South Africa. Many archaeologists are unable to conceptualize the cyclic nature of historic intervals and get caught up in ridiculous linear configurations of evolution. In this regard the ancient Indian *kalpa* or cycles concept is far more realistic. Time is cyclic. The modern science of cladistics has shown that a man and his cat are more closely related than their common ancestor in distant time. While man and cat have evolved on a remarkably similar level aquatic organisms have remained on a parallel course and we find lung fishes still swimming in the ocean, although they are the same tetrapod ancestors from which life on earth evolved ! The most primitive levels of human society likewise may still be found coexisting with highly advanced societies, and there is nothing strange in this phenomenon, which is apparent all over in nature. Thus the mentality of modern so-called “civilized” man is more closely allied perhaps with a highly bred cat or dog than a primitive human. The natural human is an entirely different species altogether. However, to get government officials or other brands of social developers to understand this is next to impossible, Modern development is a self-destructive principle in highly developed societies in tune with the cyclic nature of evolution. So-called “backward” societies reject such self-destructiveness and are in fact much more highly developed. In fact the time has come to question the entire western, Darwinian, dominant order of civilization as anti-human. The fact we have reduced the ecological security of this planet to such threatened levels is in itself a cause for concern. We have to question the western notion of development and civilization which has led to this state of affairs in the pursuit of complexity as the highest manifestation of the social orders.

The highest state of human society was during the Neolithic age when man started making refined pottery and stone tools. Archaeological examples are found such as in Mehargarh near the Bolan Pass in Baluchistan, the homeland of the Oraon tribe, a Brahui speaking people whose language was spoken in Harappa and whose culture was the basis of Harappan civilization around 5,000 BC. Here in Mehargarh archaeological excavations are over eleven metres in depth and radio carbon dating has shown dates of 5,100 BC. Flint microliths are present, and microliths have been found hafted onto wooden handles with bitumen to create saws and sycles. A copper bead recovered from the site shows that copper was known to this society. Mehargarh was the prototype for the Harappan civilization. Archaeological layers in Hazaribagh show a direct connection with Mehargarh. I will discuss the connections of the Oraons of Jharkhand with Harappa later in this work. The civilization of the Indus developed in the valley of the Indus river and if we study the evolution of the processes of civilization we shall find that river valleys afford higher levels of civilization because the silt carried down in the river gives better agriculture and hence wealth. A higher standard of living naturally accrues. It is also here that the complexification of culture begins and the process of “development” starts. The depletion of the resources of the many for the benefits of the few starts in the river valleys. Nile, Tigris, Euphrates, Indus, Ganges, Yangtze, all are examples. This form of development is consistent with the idea of Survival of the Fittest propounded by Charles Darwin in his theory of evolution. This idea was used to great effect by the colonizers of Europe who inferred that the aboriginals of the Indies were less fit. From this arose the idea of Democracy, which like capitalism, has many social flaws. India was an egalitarian tribal state from the very earliest times and its village oriented system of egalitarian parha-panchayat governance is an example for the world. The exchange economy upon which this nation lived has been slowly broken down to make way for an industrialized

market economy. Earlier while the distribution of wealth was equal, today it is inequality that rules society. The wealthy get wealthier day by day and the poor get poorer.

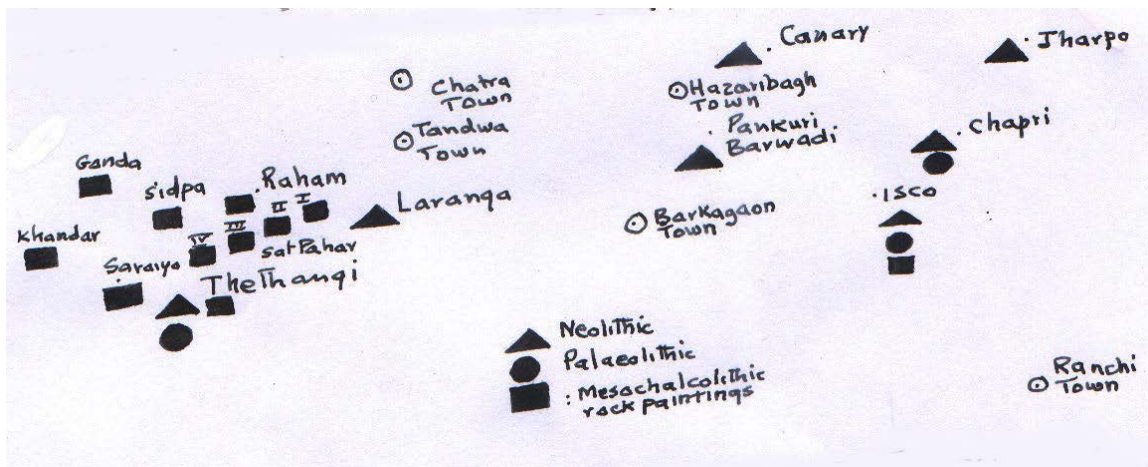
Rev.P.O.Bodding a Swedish missionary, made a valuable contribution during the nineteenth century in collection of prehistoric artifacts from the Dumka region of the Santal Parganas and nearly 2,600 objects, including over 2,000 adzes, axes, hammerstones, shouldered celts, and microliths were taken from Dumka to the Oslo museum. Barudih and Dugui Neolithic celts on river Sanjay in Singhbhum are also part of the Jharkhand archaeological canvas apart from Damodar Valley and Dumka. Polished axes, adzes, wheel-made pottery and Black Ware (BW) has been found along with samples of domestic rice in Neolithic levels. Sites are six thousand and more years old predating the Indus Valley by several millennia during the so-called Vedic or Aryan period. The rich Neolithic heritage in particular and Northeastern India in general has been consistently overlooked by the academic archaeological fraternity. I believe this has been done on purpose and for this reason I ever dis-associated myself from the academic archaeological fraternity and continued my researches in silence and alone. Jharkhand and Chattisgarh region are fit to be called the seat of Indian civilization. In the Damodar-Brahmaputra region there is a northeastern culture dating back to the chalcolithic exchange with Southeast Asia. Most of the Neolithic evidence from the rest of India are well studied but a veil has been drawn over the sites of palaeolithic interest south of the Narmada and east of the Jharkhand region. Jharkhand region has been archaeologically neglected. A proper study of the following sites of the Northeast will add upto an advanced Neolithic civilization preceding by far the Indus Valley Civilization: These are, the Mishmi Hills region, the Abor Hills region, the Lohit District, Nagaland, the Phek district, the Garo Hills, Daojali-Hading and Sarataru in Assam. Several districts of the Brahmaputra valley require archaeological excavations. The Gangetic plain Neolithic sites have been well studied right from Allahabad , i.e. Kolidhawa, Chopani, Mandol; to North Bihar, i.e. Chirand, Chapra. However, despite S.C.Roy's chalcolithic excavations in the Ranchi plateau which I will deal with later, and Rev.P.O.Bodding's wellknown finds of the Neolithic age in Dumka, no sites have been excavated in Jharkhand except for Barudih and Dugui on the Sanjay river in Singhbhum which I have mentioned (by Sen in 1969 and 1962, respectively). Why has the archaeological research in in Jharkhand been in default despite the treasure trove of palaeolithic sites I brought to light in the upper Damodar or North Karanpura Valley ? The reason in my opinion lies in the fact that uncovering a great Neolithic civilization in the Jharkhand tribal region will be an embarrassment for the hierarchical authoritarianism which governs India today. It will unveil a richer, more ancient, **and continous civilization** which is more significant than the Indus Civilization. It is in my opinion the oldest continuing civilization in the world. All evidence of this civilization has been sought to be suppressed or destroyed. The entire lower Damodar valley has been mined and the archaeological record destroyed. Both in terms of archaeology as well as cultural terms the civilization of the lower Damodar has been wiped out in the last century. Tribal culture has been devastated, the entire forests devastated, and every sacred site of the tribes destroyed through the mining. As I have again and again pointed out to the academic community in vain, prominent Neolithic sites have been destroyed openly by mining. In Saraiya the new railway has gone over an ironage and Kushan site with impunity despite my having it surveyed before Central Coalfields Limited officials by the Bihar Archaeology Department as far back as 1994 in the presence of Dr.Erwin Neumayer of Vienna. Today due to the blasting for the railway the priceless Saraiya rockart directly above the railway line and the adjacent Thethangi rockart site are being damaged. Rockart sites in Raham, Sidpa, and Gonda are threatened by a dam.

Neolithic sites at Laranga and Pankuri Barwadi are threatened by coal mines. The priceless Isco site falls in the Rautpara mine. Hazaribagh's major Neolithic sites are Isco, Thethangi, Laranga, Chapri, Pankuri Barwadi, Canary Hill, Jharpo; major palaeolithic sites are Isco, Chapri, Thethangi; Meso-chalcolithic sites are all rockart sites in Isco, Thethangi, Saraiya, Khandar, Raham, Sidpa, Gonda,, and four independent painted shelters on the back of the eastern massif of the Satpahar Range. As yet nothing has been done by the government archaeology departments to either protect or preserve these sites. INTACH's formal appeal to UNESCO in 1993 fell on deaf ears. In 1996 after I brought the discrepancy to light the Ministry of Environment and forests made archaeological clearance mandatory in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) but, since the judgement recently in the Kokan Railway case (Bombay-Goa) the court ruled that environmental clearance is not required for construction of railways.





## Damodar Valley archaeological sites of importance



Needless to say there have been no excavations or attempt to document the sites. The Isco rockart was documented by the Indian Museum, Calcutta. In each of these sites there is a connection with the continuous living culture of the region. A great ironage is witnessed in the upper Damodar Valley as I will show, and numerous Buddhist sites of great importance which have been consciously neglected although for years I have been trying to bring them onto the national Buddhist tourist route. This is all political. Everything in India is politics, even archaeology. I have shown in the godna or tattoo of the womenfolk of the valley, in the rich treasure of their village wall-paintings, the repeated icons found in the Mesolithic rockart ! Is this then not evidence of a continuous civilization ? Is not this base evidence of an indigenous people? Yet, the government does not consider these people of the valley indigenous and is presently mining the entire North Karanpura valley ? Tribal religion has not been recognized in the census of India as has been noted in the present work, and it is not given a separate acknowledgement in the constitution of India. Sarna Puja or Sacred Grove Worship, Ancestor Worship, and the worship of evil spirits or *bongas* has not been recognized as a religion apart from Hinduism. Neither has the indigenous nature of tribal society been recognized in this country. In the United Nations working Group on Indigenous Population India does not accept the existence of any indigenous peoples, nor the application of the UN's (draft) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. For how long can informed Indian citizens stand by silently without acting ? How long can we stand in silence this abuse of our national heritage by outsiders ? What is the definition of a civilization ? Civilization it has been stated, is a state of human society marked by an advanced stage of development in the arts and sciences evidenced by corresponding social, political, and cultural complexity. This is an arbitrary definition given by western man in the context of the Industrial Revolution. Earlier civilizations were considered complex enough if they had the spoked wheel, as in Sumeria. By such a definition, the North Karanpura Valley is a highly developed civilization. The highest definition of civilization is civilized behaviour, an age of refined and useful arts and peaceful crafts such as witnessed throughout the Neolithic. This level of culture had been attained already after thousands of years of highly developed rock painting had been continuing in the hilly caves, fine pottery both corded and wheel-turned was being made, fine stone tools like axes and adzes, and blades of high quality in stone were being produced. This was the time when the first maize had already been grown and the first domestic rice was being planted, and this age to me then, is the age when civilization

in its modern sense started in South Asia eight thousand years ago. The image of this civilization is still before us in Jharkhand and other forested regions of India. In Jharkhand region, Brahmaputra region, Mahanadi region in Orissa, in Chattisgarh and Bastar, all these regions abound in evidence of a Neolithic civilization earlier by many millennia than the fabled Indus civilization. The Northern Hill States have yielded hundreds of such sites. The civilizational supremacy of the Indus has been grossly over estimated and conveniently used by Aryan Hindu interests, which are foreign to the subcontinent. Specifically, the civilization of the Damodar river in Jharkhand requires to be brought sharply into focus.

The ancient culture produced by this region was taken note of in all the ancient lands. In eastern China it was known as Lati, called by the Shan in the southwest of China, Brahmadesha, in western China Sintu and Tien-chu (from which came Sindhu: i.e. Sin:moon, Tu:country), Greece called it Ganga-ridi, Central Asians referred to it as Raftha, the invading Aryans called it Bharatvarsha. According to Colonel Welford (Asiatic Society Journal (Bengal) xx, pp.227-228) *Comparative Study on the Ancient Geography of India*, and Justice Sir George Campbell (Asiatic Society Journal (Bengal) xxxv, *Supplement to Part II*, pp.27-28, *Ethnology of India*), *Kolara* or Land of the Kols was the name by which India was known to the ancient world. P.R.Sarkar has eulogized the sons of the lower Damodar which produced the great image of Bengal as *Rarhi*, and a similar eulogy is long overdue for the prehistoric culture and civilization of the upper Damodar and its environs in present-day Jharkhand. The praise for the *Rarhis* was for the cultivated sons of Bengal, not the simple adivasis of whose efforts that great culture was the fruit. When we search the wide floodplains of India from the Ganges to the Cauvery, the peoples which they produced from the Brahmins of Bengal to the Nayyars of Kerala, we find a similar eulogization of the sophisticated, the articulate, the prosperous, the cultivated, the refined. This perhaps might be omitted from my definition of the “fruits of culture” when I presently speak about the Civilization of Jharkhand. The people of upper valley cultures are consistently aboriginal whether on the Damodar or the Nile river. The nomenclature *Adivasi* in all its significances (first settler, etc.) is well reasoned to give a parallel meaning to the nomenclature *Aboriginal* used by the First Nations of the Australian continent whose lands were stolen by the European settlers.

Today everywhere the First Nations are trying to gain a place and a right for themselves in the conference of nations to decide their fate. It is significant that Jharkhand finds itself in the forefront of this same process, and it is with this in mind I am writing. The *Adivasi* culture is the indigenous culture of Jharkhand, it has retained its presence and identity intact. Over this cultural region we may witness the intense conflict between the Sadashiva cult claiming the origin of the Vedas as far back as fifteen thousand years ago, the more recent *paurnanika* religion of Shankracharya, which has given us the Tana Bhagats or Hinduized Oraons, and a climate for Brahmanical Hinduism in present-day Jharkhand. The phallic context of Shiva invented by brahminism and British scholarship on the shaky evidence of an ithyphallic yogi seal in Mohenjo-Daro of the god **An** came to challenge the massive edifice of the mother goddess cult which was beyond doubt the ruling worship of the Harappan culture witnessed in the goddess and her emblem of the fig tree in over 350 Harappan seals thirtyfive centuries ago. There is moreover no evidence in the cult of Sadashiva itself to believe that phallic idol worship was performed.

Thus phallic worship in Shiva's name was similar to much done in the name of other gods and demigods. The emergence of a triune principle of which Shiva (Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva)

was part was an invention of the Aryan model during Harappan times found also in the Maya religion. Buddhist statuary in Hazaribagh (i.e. Sekha-Barasi) reflects this form of iconography, and its evidence is felt throughout the eastern region, for which there is no reason to be surprised since we are aware of the connection between the Easter Island script and Harappan writing, as well as its picturization of tribal legends common to Jharkhand such as the Santal genesis legend in its stelae, or the parallel configuration of *mouai* (Easter Island stone heads; also pronounced *moai*) and similar megalithic creations called *mouai*, referring to the face (i.e. muha" mouth), which was the result of early sea voyages which took maize to South America from India.

The "contest motif" or two lions fought by a single male figure occurs in early Egypt, and the Indus Valley in which a man wrestles two tigers. The contest between lion and bull is found in proto-Elamite seals from Susa, Iran. All these examples date from about 3000 B.C. The bull is a traditional tribal symbol and the lion the Mesopotamian symbol of a post-tribal ruling house. Therefore Ashoka, who was a Sakya tribal, took as his symbol the lion that has become India's national symbol. In the Harappan Civilization more than three hundred and fifty seals attest to the worship of the mother goddess in the form of a woman or fig tree such as *Pipal*, *Barh*, *Dumar*, *Plaksha*, etc. The tribal deity was buffalo horned always. There is never any indication in the Indus culture preceding the Aryans of a female deity attacking and killing the buffalo which would be unheard of in the tribal world where the buffalo has been traditionally respected and revered as a deity. The memory of the man-animal or animal versus animal contest motif of the Indus is still remembered and depicted in the tribal village art of Hazaribagh. The subsequent Hindu portrayal of Durga, assisted by the Babylonian lion, symbol of Mesopotamia, attacking and killing Mahesh –Asura the buffalo god would be unheard of in the tribal pantheon, yet this is today widely celebrated without knowledge of history. The male deity of the Indus was buffalo horned- the three faced figure of An, the chief god of the Indus people who wears a buffalo horn. Shiva is called Mahesvara in Valmiki's Ramayana and associated with the Aryan concept of the tribal demon or Asura, the demon god Mahesh Asura. Indra has also taken the title of Asura in the Rig Veda as a title of power, but all reference to Mahesh Asura is to a tribal demon. As I stated, there is no evidence in the pre-Aryan culture of Harappa to show a conflict between the goddess and the buffalo, which represents the tribal male deity and is still attested to by its being portrayed as the vehicle or *vimana* of Shiva, who is a tribal god. Meanwhile the lion was associated by Brahmanism with Parvati, Shiva's consort, and this is found in the relict statuary of Hazaribagh dated as far back as the Gupta period (5<sup>th</sup> century). **(Refer to Appendix-I)** Here I would define Hinduism as three kinds for purpose of my study. 1. Brahminical Hindu, 2. Vedantic Hindu, 3. Scheduled caste semi Hinduized Aborigine. **(Refer to Appendix-II)** The Aborigines or scheduled tribes of India are not Hindus and their religion and indigenous states have not yet been acknowledged. The goddess on the back of a lion has been found on a large stone relief in a Mauryan period site at Sidpa in the western North Karanpura valley similar to the earliest image of a female deity on the back of a lion found in Hacliar IV in Turkey (5000 BC).

Hazaribagh: Land of a Thousand Tigers is decidedly important in the understanding of Shiva and the tiger. As tiger authority John Seidensticker has observed, " Shiva is the symbol of both destroyer and reproducer. As destroyer, he is pictured wearing a tiger skin and riding a tiger. His consort is Parvati the Beautiful, who in her dark side appears as Durga the Terrible, riding a tiger. In some Asian cultures, tigers incarnate mystery and potentially

dangerous beings. Shamans and magicians adapt the guise of tigers to promote powerful images. Tigers are believed to be the avengers of their Supreme Being or to punish sinners...” ( John Seidensticker, *Why Save Tigers. Saving Wild Tigers* , Edited by Valmik Thapar, Permanent Black, New Delhi 2001 , p.312.). In the same book the most prominent protector of the tiger of the century-end, Valmik Thapar, has observed, in connection with the all-out massacre of the big cats going on at present alongwith massive destruction of their habitat, that there was recovered in Uttar Pradesh between the last fortnight of 1999 and the first fortnight of 2000 the skin, bones, and derivatives of no less than fourteen hundred leopards and fifty tigers in one of the “factories” processing animal parts for a foreign market, the stuff being smuggled out via Siliguri. Why such a special corridor between North India for the massacre of the tiger ? The tiger is threatened across its range by deforestation , especially through statesponsored destructive development projects like mining and dams, but such a concerted poaching of the tiger is unheard-of before. The government is starting four hundred opencast mines for mining coal across the whole of Madhya Pradesh to eastern Maharashtra and Orissa. It starts in the North Karanpura Valley in Jharkhand. The World Bank is directly funding twentyfive mines. In the North Karanpura Valley Coal India has begun the first two of 24 mine blocks which will destroy 2000 sq.km. of the only tiger corridor between the Project Tiger preserve in Palamau, and the Hazaribagh forests. In the concerted attack upon the forest and the forest dweller I cannot but see an attack upon Shiva’s people, just as the tribal had earlier been portrayed as a demon, an Asura. The tribal is refused to be accepted as he is. This need to change the tribal is the result of an archetype. The upper castes refuse to see the tribal as a developed human being. In fact, as he is, he is hardly even considered a human being. Thus the urgency to change the tribal, bring him “into the mainstream” . In modern India this fundamentalism of archetype has been long since established and the tribal is as threatened a species as the tiger, and both inhabit the same habitat. Both are threatened throughout their range, which incidentally also means the entire forested and mineral resources range of India, of hydel and forest resources, of marble and gemstones, of rare and exotic species like the tiger... The threat to the tiger is equally valid as the threat to the tribal. 10,000 square kilometers of thick forests are destroyed every year in India. In the North Karanpura Valley of Hazaribagh in the upper catchment of River Damodar, the 24 mine blocks consisting over seventy opencast mines will wipe out the rice bowl of Hazaribagh --- the richest agricultural valley in the world perhaps – as well as destroying 203 tribal villages, and obliterating forever the longest continuing civilization’s remains ( from the palaeolithic to the present). The tiger corridors from the catchment of the Damodar river to the catchments of the rivers Bokaro, Konar, Barakar, Mohania, will be severed forever. This will in turn destroy the survival of the tiger in Hazaribagh. Every jungle village in this great forested range has wall paintings of tigers and elephants in the famous Khovar and Sohrai style. The tribals and their art are as threatened a species as the tiger and the elephant in Hazaribagh today. The assault upon the tiger is an assault upon the people of Shiva. Shiva is the symbol of the forest and the forest people. The tiger is the symbol of Shiva. It is unheard of in tribal land that the goddess can ride the tiger, for the tiger is Shiva’s animal self.

Valmik Thapar has pointed out, “ We are already losing at least 10,000 sq.km. of dense forest each year to timber mafias and so-called developers. We believe that at least 12 billion dollars worth of forest is exploited from India’s national treasury each year, and I am convinced that hundreds of tigers and leopards are trapped, poisoned and poached so that their skin, claws and derivatives feed the international market.” ( *Ibid* , p.398) . As I have

said the North Karanpura Valley stands to lose two thousand square kilometers of vital connectivity-cum-habitat forests of tiger and elephant between Palamau and Hazaribagh forests, as a result of the North Karanpura Coalfields Project. The World Bank had advanced five hundred thousand dollars, but after our hue and cry over the threat to the corridors and indigenous peoples it has now thank goodness, withdrawn the balance of the loan, 230 million US dollars. That wildlifers, human rights activists, and others, could bring the WB to heel, is a rare achievement in the annals of conservation I am sure. The Piperwar and Ashoka I and II mines have destroyed already hundreds of square kilometers of forest corridors on the left, or north, bank of the young river Damodar. Thousands of fruit yielding ancient *mohwa* (*Madhuca indica*) trees have already been blasted and bulldozed out of existence, and countless thousands of others. Such trees take several centuries to grow. **They can never be replaced.** Several hundreds of thousands of such trees stand to be destroyed in the North Karanpura Valley due to the proposed mining. These are the survival resource not only of the local people but all people on the planet. The length of the North Karanpura Valley is covered by the forested and isolate Mahadeva Range named for Shiva, and the Satpahar Range named for its seven hills. The government's current plan is to mine them to the base, and dam the rivers flowing through them, Damodar, Garhi, Barki, and thirtyseven smaller streams ... Can we ever allow this to happen in Jharkhand ? It is for the youth of India to decide. The time has come when the youth of India must decide the fate of this nation being selfishly destroyed by old-timers in every state. The call to arms is around the corner for the youth of India to save what is left. Otherwise their children will have nothing.

Sometime during the middle of the first millennium before Christ, Mahavira Barddhamana came to this land of forests called Jharkhand from Magadh. At that time Jharkhand and the lower Damodar district of Manbhum were covered with forests, inhabited by tribals in their age-old villages, living the cultural lifestyle of Sarkar's golden age of Western Rarh. Jaina sites were strewn about this land in countless thousand shrines and places of pilgrimage. When the mining of the lower Damodar valley began in earnest around 1900 there was still 65 percent forests in Manbhum . The All India Kurmi Kshatriya Mahasabha started in 1894 in Bihar and by the 1920s caused the Kurmis of Manbhum to become brahmanized completely. The forests were steadily hacked down and thousands of Kurmi, Santal, and other tribals lost their lands and forests and means of subsistence survival, outside settlers from the north poured in and took over control of the lands left after mining. By 1985 the official area under forests in Manbhum was down to 0.5 percent. (Lindsay Barnes, *Women Work and Struggle:Bhowra Colliery, 1900-1985*, PhD Thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi,1989). The great forests of Manbhum had been the elephant highway of Jharkhand linking the Giridih/Parasvanath jungles in the north with the Purulia/Gola-Peterbar jungles in the south, making complete the connectivity from the Ganges to the Suvarnarekha in Singhbhum, and even upto the Mahanadi in Orissa. At the early period before the mining had become volatile, a peaceful lifestyle continued in Manbhum, Shivadharm of Rarh was based upon *Tantra*, while in the hilly tracts of Jharkhand on the Chotanagpur plateau the *adivasi* spirit-worship or *bonga-puja* and *bhutaha-puja* (*bonga* is a god, *bhutaha* means a demon, and *puja* means a placatory offering or sacrifice) continued undisturbed and the mother-goddess worshipping cult continued in the sacred groves where she was known as Jhairn-era or Burhi-ma, and in their socioeconomic activities of hunting and agriculture the *adivasis* referred to her as their protector, while in the more hinduized villages she was referred to as *Devi* , represented by the married women of a village upon whom ritual and wisdom rites conferred the title *Devi*. Place deities, spirit-worship, alcohol and blood

sacrifices were part of this village life, which continues till today. Small wooden posts called Bonga-buru or the Khutas or wooden posts that are the guardian spirits of the village may very often be found on the eastern side of a village where the bhagats or medicine-men have set up a rustic altar for the protective ancestral deities to guard the village. On the other hand, at or near the megalithic sites may be found the rows of stones which are propitiated by the Bhagat or medicine-man and serve a similar function when anointed with vermilion and offered sacrifices. These are, patriarchal manifestations since the medicine-man is a man, not a woman, and are believed to confer their protection and disbursement of favours. Such is the nature of worship and belief that a muddled hotchpotch between the ancient tribal worship and brahminized Hindu worship is witnessed, the only clear criterion being that the Brahmin takes no part in this religious village life, and rites of passage are conducted without him. Under such circumstances the Hindu temple is an obsolete acquisition wherever it may be found in jungle villages. Totemism is a direct adjunct of tribal life from the Pacific to India, and Africa and common to First Peoples everywhere on the planet. Brahmanical Hindus brought a way of life built upon the Vedas, themselves composed in Iran, a way of belief different to the bongaism and totemism of tribal societies. This resulted historically in the Mahabharata, which I will deal with later. Hinduism was opposed by Jainism and Buddhism on the east bank of the Ganges from Varanasi to Magadh, and the Hindus were confined to their kingdom of Aryavarta carved out on the northern slopes of the Vindhya and the Aravallis from Oudh to Indus, wherein they created a mini-empire from where they broadcast wider hold on peninsular India. The Jains and Buddhists both held out their final days of glory in the forested hilly tracts of Jharkhand leaving as souvenirs to posterity many a hoary tribute in stone, long since Brahmanized (seen in temple statuary given Hindu significance even when of Buddhist origin) despite Buddhist or Jaina iconology. The Baul ideology, meanwhile, in Bengal sacrosanct in Rarh, was the offspring of a quest for the link between the known and the unknown, the finite and the infinite. The Bauls are a musical people, sometimes called mad, whose esoteric control of the stringed instrument is legendary. The name Baul or Batul I am told means mad. This became a pervasive spirit of Rarh from the Suvarnarekha and Kamsavati rivers to the Damodar, Ganges and its lower arm called Bhagirathi in the district of Murshidabad. The people of Rarh are of protoaustraloid and mongoloid mixture because of ancient Central Asian contact via the Brahmaputra valley via Tibet, the same route which carried Buddhism up to the Tibetan plateau. It is said the red soil of Rarh is three hundred million years old. As old or even older is the soil of Jharkhand, and fossils found here point to the origin of life forms, from the hard crusted small animals appearing on earth after the unicellular and hermaphrodite multicellular creatures. Seafossil and Cretaceous animals have left their remains in the valleys of the hilly areas pointing to interglacial sea rise levels. The ancient traditions of Rarh treat the Aryans as foreign intruders.

The same traditions surround the social history of Jharkhand against the advent of brahminism which was challenged by social reformers like the Buddha. The Aryan entry is as unexpected as it is undefined, but there is reason to believe a sea route via the Bay of Bengal was more expedient, since this was well known and well traveled. This we may recall, was also taken by the French, Portuguese, and British, and in earlier times perhaps by the Mesopotamians to Myanmar (Burma). While in passing I may point out here that the massive empire of Ashoka stopped at Kalinga in Orissa, and there is evidence to show the route of Ashoka to Orissa lay through Jharkhand and that Hazaribagh and the North Karanpura valley was very likely a major source of the iron used by the Mauryan empire in



clearfelling the Ganges and building up its weaponry. Vast mounds of iron-slag testifying to clearfelling of the North Karanpura valley for smelting iron is found in the region, and I will deal with it later.

Asko Parpola the modern linguist, in his new work **,Decipherment of the Indus Script** (Cambridge University Press, 1994/1999) has held to the view of J.H. Elfenbein (*The Baluchi Language: a dialectology with texts.*, Royal Asiatic Society Monographs, 27, London, 1966), that the Indus language spoken in Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro was of the North Dravidian branch of the Brahui speakers who had their base along the Narmada valley with its easternmost distribution among the Kurukh speaking Oraons of Jharkhand, and the Malto speakers of the Rajmahal hills who are also Oraons. The Oraon dialect called Kurukh in Hazaribagh and Ranchi is directly derived from Kuru, the name of the one hundred tribal peoples supposed to have been from Hastinapura and its surrounds and who were defeated by the Pandavas on Kurukshetra battleground in what is today modern Haryana, between Delhi and Chandigarh. This supposition is far from being merely imaginative and is grounded in hard linguistic reasoning as shown by Asko Parpola. Kurukh he has shown was the spoken Brahui language of Harappa, the script of which remains undeciphered. A study of Kurukh and the Oraons is essential to the unveiling of the Indus script in consonance with the remains of a proto-Harappan script found in the prehistoric rockart of Hazaribagh at around 4000-5000 years old period. The western limits of Brahui are among the Brahui themselves in the rugged hills of Baluchistan overlooking the Sindh valley from the southwest. The common oral histories of the Oraons and Santals, as also the Mundas, all refer to migrations from the west down the Ganges valley to Rohtas on the Sone. This hill fortress, which gave refuge to the young prince Khurram fleeing the rage of his father Jehangir, rests heavy upon the breast of tribal travels in northern India. All or some of tribes passing this way have stopped at Rohtas for a respite during travels. It is fortuitous that Rohtas stands immediately south of the Grand Trunk Road, the Asian Highway, which links Singapore to Kabul and Europe, and which was the route for the eastern trade or the southern Silk Road to China. The Silk Route for ancient trade from the Ganges-Brahmaputra valley goes up from Siliguri to Kalimpong, and over the Gelep La Pass, thence via the Chumbi Valley to Yatung, Phari, and Gyantse to Lhasa, and it saw the earliest impact of Mongolian influence in India's Northeastern culture, including upon the Mundaric peoples. When the pressure of the Aryan might pressed heavily upon the Santals and Mundas in the Himalaya-Sindh complex they fell back via Rohtas to Bihar. Equally, the ubiquitous Oraon plied a different route, ***south of the Vindhya***, which region has been detailed by Sarat Chandra Roy as the site for the earliest society in India (S.C. Roy, *The Mundas and Their Country, Man In India, Ranchi, 1912, Reprint Edn. 1995, pages 9-11*), and moreover Roy observed "the Mundas and their cognate tribes occupied Northern India before the forefathers of the Aryan Hindus entered the country." The common oral histories of the Oraons, Santals, and Mundas testify to long migrations, and a stay in the Rohtas fort. Local oral traditions in song of the Oraons in Hazaribagh recalls the long passage through the Satpura ranges, ( "... *Sa-at-pura-a-ke-bon-mey : ref: Oraon song*). Here at Rohtas the Mundas have an old tradition of fighting off attackers from the northwest, and which traditional belief I have found in localities like Isco in Hazaribagh among the Mundas, which is most likely reference to the invasions of the Muslims in more recent times. The story is well known about the Oraons who faced a similar attack at Rohtas on the Sone on a Sarhul puja day long ago when all the menfolk were drunk and the womenfolk had to take up arms and drive off the attackers,. This is celebrated every twelve years by Oraon women

going out on a mock hunt dressed up like men, called *Jani Shikar*, which takes place around the Sarhul festival time during the month of March after Holi. There is also a tradition that the Asurs when in Khunti faced an attack from the Mundas, which has received some mutilation at the hand of modern historians who built up a story of the sungod (clearly a brahminical icon) destroying the Asurs, which is not accepted by the Asurs themselves in their own version of the *Asur Kahani*. Moreover the Asurs are the same tribe as the Agarias of Madhya Pradesh, which point is never conveniently remembered, and no such ill-gotten legend accrues to the Agaria. From this instance alone we can see the prejudice and misreporting on tribal traditions by vested interests. In more recent times Singbonga has been associated with the Christian god. Further, the word *sin* does not mean sun, but moon, and in its most ancient form it is associated with a horned (*i.e. singh*) deity. In brahminism, *Sin*, has been associated with singh: lion, an avatar of Vishnu, hence associate with the sun. However, to my knowledge the solar Vishnu has no place in the pantheon of tribal worship in Chotanagpur.

The civilization and culture of Jharkhand moves along its watercourses and watersheds, in its forested and agricultural ecosystems nursed from time immemorial by the interactions between the tribals and the great natural forests which they partly cleared and harnessed for agriculture, such ecosystems changing their cultural content every fifty kilometers on average. Micegenation or the intermixing of tribal groups have given a homogeneity of their own to the classic definition of what constitutes tribal culture, or for that meaning any culture. But we must not lose sight of the fact that while all tribes are basically similar and merely manifestations of the individual dynamics of independent bioregions, the identity of tribal arts and crafts may be seen to register a wonderful face of change over very short distances. If I may use the evidence of common rice – *coix* – it changes its variety from field to field yet still retains its basic identity, *and thus some twenty thousand varieties of rice spring from the bosom of India*. The poet Rabindranath Tagore wrote, “The problem is not how to wipe out all differences, but how to unite with all differences intact.” In the tribal world, in the world of nature, we can see how this is achieved. Every fifty kilometers artforms change, dialects change, manners change, significances of things change, attitudes, customs and aspirations change. In a rapidly changing world this change will be felt ever more poignantly, perhaps one day only between person and person, but this difference is the clue to the crisis of cultural identity. The evidence of evolution in artforms, even those having close contact with the prehistoric rockart of the Hazaribagh region is drawn attention to here. The northern limits of this map of rockart sites east of the Mirzapur hills is to be found in the Jamui district adjoining Nevada, Koderma, Giridih, and Banka districts found to be an early prehistoric site which has now been forfeited by Jharkhand to Bihar in the formation of the new state. I will come to this later. The Chatra district to the west of Hazaribagh is that portion of Jharkhand which has traditionally been the link between the jungle tribes of Chotanagpur and Lohardaga and the region ancestrally occupied for themselves by the Biharis.

Jharkhand may be seen as a broadly plateau region defined by its topographical nature, surrounded by the districts of Birbhum, Gopabhum, Samantabhum, Shikarbhum (Hazaribagh), Mallabhum, Senbhum, Manbhum, Barabhum, Singhbhum, Dhalbhum, Shabarbhumi, and Bhursur --- in which I have used the original colloquial names of these regions here. All these regions have for millennia been the source of an unending plethora of natural wealth which has been attacked enviously from without, this action continuously

alienating the original inhabitants ... whether it was the Moguls extracting the elephants of Palamau and Singhbhum, diamonds and gold from the Sunkh, the British extracting forests and cheap tribal labour, or the recent exploitation by the government of coal and forests as a source of revenue for the rest of the country. Always the exploitation of Jharkhand's resources was for the benefit of the outsider. The region most affected by the influx of outsiders were the coal mine areas of the lower Damodar Valley. As the census of 1921-31 shows over 200,000 people migrated to this region from outside the state. Each subsequent census has shown the decimation of the local tribal population and the infiltration of outsiders.

The original rulers of the Eastern Ghats of Orissa were the Khond tribals or Odiyas, meaning chieftain, or king. Under the Hindu programme of expansionism these Khonds were steadily marginalized and driven back into the hilly forested areas where they sought shelter from the outsiders who occupied the lower plains, and in isolated groups among the steep hills they managed to retain some semblance of their old way of life which held them together as a community with a common identity. Tribal deities were meanwhile adopted by the Hindus as in the case of the deity Jagganath who was a Savara deity. Meanwhile the tribals were alike feared and respected on the one hand because the non-tribals could not understand them, and on the other they were ruthlessly exploited because the non-tribals were cleverer at exploitation, which was a game tribal societies are never good at. Thus when the Khonds, Hos, Mundas, Santals, Oraons, rose up in open revolt in the mid-nineteenth century in Orissa, Singhbhum, Ranchi, Hazaribagh, and Rajmahal hills even the British chose flight – such were the tribal uprisings in Birbhum, Bankura, Murshidabad, Santal Parganas, Singhbhum, Ranchi and Hazaribagh during 1855-56. It was called a Sepoy Mutiny by the British because they did not wish to admit that it was an indigenous revolt against their underhandedness and exploitation, under the guise of over-running Chotanagpur to thwart the Marhatta attack. The situation conflated to such an extent that only bringing in missionaries from Europe could help. Where the eagle failed the cross succeeded. Thus were the Christian missions to Chotanagpur opened up, each denomination parceling out its own territories. The plains people feared the hill people and the only mediator that has ever remained are the missions in one form or another since they identified with both sides, and inevitably the Christian missions have been caught in the crossfire. Infact it was a Christian bishop who gave away the whereabouts of Birsa Munda in Chalka when he was arrested and brought to die languishing for his broad forests in the Ranchi jail. We are good at forgetting our own misdeeds if it suits us, and it is the policy of converters and conquerors to forget their passage in all its iniquity if its outcome is pleasurable for generations who know not the sting of displacement, the fear of iron chains, or the biting lash of the whip. This scene has continued upto today in the hilly forest areas all over Jharkhand where extremist violence has become a way of life for millions, not knowing whether the police or the terrorists are more to be feared. The fear of tribals is the same vengeance they feared when Viswamitra brought Rama to search out the Asura harassers to the sages' worship. Birbhum was ancestrally a place for these bagdis or aboriginals described in the Pandit's Chronicle of Bishnupur, Appendix E as, "wearing long black hair, decorating themselves with iron ornaments and silver bangles, carrying spears, employed as warriors by kings." The same prejudice is noted by Verrier Elwin who writes "No Indian tribe can be altogether unaffected by the prevailing Hindu civilization, yet on the whole it is astonishing what little effect this has had upon the Baiga's mind. "(V.Elwin, *The Baiga*, John Murray, London, 1939, p.xxvii). Elwin also criticized the missionary's manner of preventing tribals the right to use their personal dress

and ornamentation in their traditional custom, with particular reference to the Northeast region. These observances are to be understood in the modern Indian scene in which there is no constitutional recognition of tribal religion or indigenous identity. These two major lacunae in the Constitution of India require to be challenged. Presently there is no recognition by India in the Census of India of tribal religion as a religion, nor is there official recognition before the United Nations of the tribals of India as an indigenous community. Daily tribals are being de-tribalized by their being brought into the Scheduled Castes, which by its own admission constitutes "semi-hinduized aborigines." This is achieved by enticement, or irregular listing questionnaire in the Census. It was challenged by W.G. Archer, who was Census Superintendent, Bihar, 1939-41 at Hazaribagh, and Archer remodeled the questionnaire. Earlier, many tribals had been listed as Hindus in the 1931 Census questions. As a result of Archer's new questionnaire the numbers listed as tribals went up significantly in the 1941 Census. But, this did not please Hindu politicians, and again the questionnaire was reframed and in the 1951 Census tribals again were listed as Hindus.

The founding of the first kingly rule among the tribes of Chotanagpur was the founding of the Nagbanshi chieftain of the Mundas in 64 AD when Phani Mukut Rai was reportedly found at birth under the hood of a huge cobra by a Sakaldweep Brahmin carrying an idol of the sun-god. Thus the earliest brahminical tradition accrues in Chotanagpur, and the Nagbanshi rajas received Hindu patronage and united the Mundas of Ranchi under some sort of common banner until the Moghuls entered and destroyed their suzerainty. Still earlier the subtle proselytism of brahminism had been at work for over a millennia in the marital relations engaged by brahminical Hindus between Chotanagpuri and Central Indian tribal chiefs with Marwari and Mewari brides of Hindu ancestry from Rajasthan and Gujarat, with the title Singh claiming Rajput ancestry. Both these regions had seen the conversion of fierce desert tribes to Hinduism, and the chiefs of these areas were eager to marry off their daughters to the tribal chiefs from Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Jharkhand among other tribal regions.

As far back as Mogul times Chero chieftains ruled in Shahabad and Sasaram despite Hindu pressures from the west down the Ganges valley, and these Cheros moved slowly to join their kinsmen in Palamau where Chero forts may still be found in the Project Tiger area of the Betla Wildlife Sanctuary along the banks of the North Koel river. S.C. Roy has shown the presence of Kols across the entire Ganges valley since time immemorial, and Dalton had noted that the Cheros of Shahabad by 1872 were only in the very poorest condition (Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, 1872), when the proud lineage of the tribal chieftains was stripped and humiliated through poverty, that harbinger of hard times in *Homo sapiens economicus*, tradition tells us that the proud Cheros, and their kinsmen the Kherwars, eventually took refuge in the hilly forested regions of Palamau. When we look at the archaeological sites and ancient place-names on the Ganges valley from east to west our attention is drawn to their evidence as Kol strongholds, or of Kherwar, Chero, or Munda. These tribal lords were eventually subdued by the proud chariot of brahmanism and driven out. Eventually, as Dalton noted, the Cheros were found wearing the Hindu caste thread (*poita*) as evidence of being Hindus and thereby perceiving no harm from the Hindus. Some Kherwars even claimed to be Rajputs. It is this pathetic state which is even today threatening our beloved Jharkhand, forest land, tribal land and its traditional culture. When tribal land is gone, tribal identity gone, what lives on? The state of poverty of these tribals in Palamau was the result of the infamous system of Bonded labour imposed by the Hindu merchants whose

traces are still not done away with. The same ill fortune overcame the Kols of south Bhagalpur who once ruled that area as Bhuinyars or clearers of the land. Thus were the *adivasi* rajas slowly overcome by the general pressures of Brahmanization, later Christianization. The tribal masses followed the style of their chiefs in accepting these modern developments towards attaining a better standard of material living offered by these advanced societies which were not consistent with the stringencies of a traditional tribal subsistence lifestyle. In the process of material development the traditional knowledges and institutions of their particular cultural niche were destroyed, often with the connivance of the society they were being accepted into. Their religious observances were mutated, their languages were made obsolete in the wider parlance of a new sophisticated way of communication, and their cultures were destroyed at the root in accepting inculturation. It may be seen as the outcome of impressionableness, a tribal innocence gone astray. It is by no means novel in the history of the mutation of human cultures. The pattern has been found consistent wherever traditional ethnic societies have faced outside modern forces. It happened with the Inca, Maya, Aztec, and the North American Plains Indian. It was resisted by the Australian Aboriginal in the twentieth century. It overcame the tribal nations of Africa and Polynesia. It led to the indigenous rights movement internationally and the setting up of a special mission within the United Nations for First Nation or sovereign indigenous nations and a chair at the UN. The oscillations in religio-cultural practices between the Bushman and the Boer, the same developments throughout India, have now reached national endemic proportions in a race to either hinduize or christianize the tribal first. The entry of the market economy and the global transnational corporations has sealed the tribal fate. Whatever their leaders do is more or less consistent with the aspirations of the communities which they represent, but the forces which direct the exploitation of natural resources as capital do not change. In all tribal areas on a national level it is considered okay to treat natural and national capital as income. Market freedom is seen as being compatible with democracy. Bigger is better. Labour is a factor of production. Resources are seen as infinite. The environmental crisis is seen as irrelevant. Markets must be free, and growth must be the mainspring of economic development. (John Papworth, *Fourth World Review*, No.103, 2000, p.27) As a result of the acceptance of Nehruvian policies of development and exploitation of natural resources as the nation's capital the tribal areas were targeted first of all and tribals lost their lands and forests, their commons, rivers, sacred sites such as their sacred groves or *sarna* which are forest temples, their burial grounds or *pathalgada*, and dancing grounds or *akhara*, as well as their villages. Eventually their ancient archaeological heritage was either destroyed by mining or sunk in big dams. The evidence of tribal culture as the foundations of Indian society were slowly but surely destroyed purposively. Tribals lost their individual status and had to build a new image for themselves in a non compatible competitive society which was new to them. In this survival predicament both christianization and hinduization were very helpful in adaption to the new paradigm.

Immigrants from western India speaking alien languages have traditionally been a threat to *adivasi* cultures. The same thing happened in Jharkhand which is seen in the modern history of the region. From the borders with Orissa and Jashpur in Madhya Pradesh to the borders of Bengal in the Santal Parganas and the valley cultures of the Ganges, from the Vindhya in the west to the Eastern Ghat ranges in the east there was a cultural change. It was accelerated with Independence and the imposing of nationalism on the resources of this sensitive region. The forests were systematically wiped out. Destabilizing of tribal society, under one guise or another, led to the success of the national mission to appropriate the resources of the region

for itself. The old principle of governance outlined by Kautilya for the administration of tribal areas (*Arthashastra*), were overlooked despite Nehru's sympathetic Panchsheel or Five Principles, which was never applied on the ground. Jharkhand was under Pala-Sena rule, a period of great Buddhist activity which took place throughout Hazaribagh and its environs and is attested to by rare archaeological remains from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century. Even earlier remains of Buddhist sites lie in the forests from Gaya to Itkhour, as well as Jaina sites as found in Kolhua Pahar and elsewhere. In Hazaribagh 9<sup>th</sup> century Buddhist images have been found in the vicinity of Canary and Sitagarha hills, and remains in Canary Hill have been tested to go back to an even earlier period of Buddhist building in the Kushan period during the first century. Ochre coloured pottery (OCP) has been found west of Canary Hill and dated to 400 BC but it is also known OCP was found in the Pre-Harappan level of Khabangan in Indus. In Sitagarha Buddhist statuary dating from the *Harshvardhana* period has been found, with a votive stupa of the Kushan period and a few pieces of Painted Grey Ware (PGW) obviously not more recent than 300 BC, in an iron site. Similar remains were brought to light at Thethangi in the western North Karanpura valley which have unfortunately been destroyed by the new railway line being constructed from McCluskiegunj to Mangardaha for the coal washery of the Piperwar mine. This was despite an assurance from CCL that the site would not be damaged given to the Bihar Archaeology Department in 1993. In Dato a 11<sup>th</sup> century statue of Buddhist Saraswati with Pala inscription has been found. There is an important Mauryan site at Sidpa on the north side of Satpahar range. Over a hundred large stones lie scattered on the side of the road about half a kilometre from a wonderful rockart site. I will talk about the Buddhist sites in some detail later.





LIST OF COPPER OBJECTS FOUND IN THE DISTRICT OF RANCHI.

| S. No. | Description of the articles.        | Period       | Locality                   | How obtained                         |
|--------|-------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1.     | Copper axe-head                     | Copper Age   | Vill : Bedwa               | Found by Mr. S.C. Roy                |
| 2.     | Copper axe-head                     | Copper Age   | V. Bartoli<br>P.S. Bansia  | Presented by H.H. Sir<br>Edward Gait |
| 3.     | Copper axe-head                     | Copper Age   | V. Bandna<br>P.S. Ranchi   | Presented by Mr. S.C.<br>Roy         |
| 4.     | Copper axe-head                     | Copper Age   | V. Bartola<br>P.S. Bansia  | H.H. Sir Edward Gait                 |
| 5.     | Copper axe-head                     | Copper Age   | V. Kandesa<br>P.S. Ranchi  | Presented by Sir S.C.<br>Roy         |
| 6.     | Copper axe-head                     | Copper Age   | V. Kandesa<br>P.S. Ranchi  | Presented by Sir S.C.<br>Roy         |
| 7.     | Copper axe-head                     | Copper Age   | V. Dargoma<br>P.S. Khunti  | Presented by Sir S.C.<br>Roy         |
| 8.     | Copper bracelets                    | Copper Age   | Buruma                     | Excavated by<br>Sir S.C. Roy         |
| 9.     | Copper ear-ornaments                | Copper Age   | Buruma                     | Excavated by<br>Sir S.C. Roy         |
| 10.    | Copper toe-rings                    | Copper Age   | Buruma                     | Excavated by<br>Sir S.C. Roy         |
| 11.    | Fragments of copper<br>ornaments    | Copper Age   | Buruma                     | Excavated by<br>Sir S.C. Roy         |
| 12.    | Copper ceremonial<br>wheel          | Copper Age   | Lohardoga                  | Presented by<br>Mr. S.C. Roy         |
| 13.    | Copper bracelets                    | Copper Age   | Khunti<br>Subdivision      | Excavated by<br>Mr. S.C. Roy         |
| 14.    | Copper diba                         | Copper Age   | Ranchi                     | T.T. Act                             |
| 15.    | Copper bracelets                    | Copper Age   | Namkom                     | Excavated by<br>Mr. S.C. Roy         |
| 16.    | Copper rings                        | Asura graves | Namkom                     | Presented by<br>Mr. S.C. Roy         |
| 17.    | Copper bells                        | Copper Age   | Buruma                     | Presented by<br>Mr. S.C. Roy         |
| 18.    | Copper ear-ornament                 | Copper Age   | Digi, P.S.<br>Chakradhapur | Presented by<br>Mr. S.C. Roy         |
| 19.    | Copper rings                        | Copper Age   | Digi, P.S.<br>Chakradhapur | Presented by<br>Mr. S.C. Roy         |
| 20.    | Copper ear-ornaments<br>and objects | Copper Age   | V. Murud,<br>P.S. Khunti   | Presented by<br>Mr. S.C. Roy         |
| 21.    | Copper chains (in 6<br>pieces)      | Copper Age   | V. Murud,<br>P.S. Khunti   | Presented by<br>Mr. S.C. Roy         |
| 22.    | Copper bracelets                    | Copper Age   | Kanthartoli                | Presented by<br>Mr. S.C. Roy         |
| 23.    | Copper bracelets                    | Copper Age   | V. Gargaon                 | Presented by<br>Mr. S.C. Roy         |
| 24.    | Copper Vessels                      | Copper Age   | V. Behia,<br>P.S. Ranchi   | Presented by<br>Mr. S.C. Roy         |
| 25.    | Copper or bronze<br>bracclets       | Copper Age   | V. Khuntitoli              | Presented by<br>Mr. S.C. Roy         |
| 26.    | Copper or bronze<br>earrings        | Copper Age   | V. Khuntitoli              | Presented by<br>Mr. S.C. Roy         |
| 27.    | Copper axe-head                     | Copper Age   | Ranchi District            | Presented by<br>Mr. S.C. Roy         |
| 28.    | Copper axe-head                     | Copper Age   | V. Bartola<br>P.S. Basia   | H.H. Sir Edward Gait                 |
| 29.    | Copper axe-head                     | Copper Age   | Ranchi                     | Presented by E.C.<br>Ansurge, I.C.S. |

## Prehistory and protohistory of Hazaribagh

“ In the absence of any recorded history, the tribal people are believed to be the original and earliest settlers of this land, who came from the west and northwest.”(Jagdish Singh, *A Study in Settlement Geography: Upper Damodar Valley*, Inter-India Publications, New Delhi, 1952/85, p.13). This admirably sums up the attempt by outsiders to try and show Jharkhand's tribals are not indigenous. The archaeological evidence on the other hand points clearly to a palaeolithic society whose continuance through various archaeological levels upto the present times may be studied. There is a palaeolithic habitation base close by to all the thirteen rockart sites so far discovered in the North Karanpura valley. Alongside these may be found Neolithic as well as Mesolithic workings. Finally there are the huge stone megaliths I have referred to. There are series of huge iron-slag deposits in all the villages of the North Karanpura valley which in their depth and extent all point to an ancient and considerable iron-age civilization worked by the Asurs, who are no longer found in the region. A series of small hills of iron-slag may be seen at Kharati –Gosain Balia, which were saved from destruction by a timely intervention by INTACH otherwise they were being used for road construction. In Tandwa particularly large deposits several metres in depth may be seen under the present village level. The extent of these iron-slag deposits was calculated by Dr. Erwin Neumayer to be evidence of the felling of the trees of the entire valley for the making of iron. It has been speculated the 3000 year old iron pillar at the Kutb Minar in Delhi may have come from this site. The beginnings of the Iron Age may be placed around 1100 BC, and certainly some parts of the valley must recall this date of iron-age civilization. An earlier age may be seen in the megalithic sites in the same areas. These huge standing stones erected from around 5000 BC tell of a vanished culture of people before the Chalcolithic age, which is witnessed in Chotanagpur around 3000 BC. A bronze blow tube was found at Isco, and several pieces have been found of this type in Hazaribagh. This period is witnessed in its glory in the excavations of S.C. Roy and Sir Edward Gait in Ranchi in 1915-1920 which produced hundreds of copper and bronze artefacts testifying to a great Chalcolithic civilization in the Khunti-Gumla-Lohardaga area. The collection is housed partly in the Man In India office at Ranchi, the Patna Museum and partly in the S.C. Roy Collection at the Indian Museum, Calcutta. Wheeled animal clay carts and votive figures in Khond style in copper-bronze, along with vast numbers of stone tools of all types from heavy Neolithic ceremonial hand-axes to flint blades were excavated

The Asur copper (Kansa) objects discovered by S.C. Roy in Ranchi included in the objects found in Khunti and Gumla, copper bracelets and anklets, as well as waist links chains identical to the similar hoard discovered by me in Hazaribagh in the Tandwa region. It is notable that according to Meera Roy (to me) the daughter of late S.C. Roy her father's objects were dated by an American scientist to 300 B.P which would be around the time the Upanishads were being composed. A remarkable coincidence between the father's collection is that among both hoards discovered in clay pots were copper coins (written) inscribed in Arabic. My own view is that these Asur jewelries were handed down by generations of Asur women for three thousand years. When the Muslim invasion took place I believe the soldiers intermarried with Asur women and the jewelries became heirlooms that were stoned along with the coins of that period, and so came to be found together in the same hoards.

An even earlier age precedes it in the Mesolithic workings evidenced in microliths at nearly all the rockart sites, and a huge microlith-working site at Laranga on the Garhi river referred

to elsewhere. That such sites are directly connected with Neolithic sites also at Laranga, Thethangi, Isco, Canary, Jharpo, etc. is overlooked by authorities of settlement geography. There is thus no reason whatsoever to doubt that the present *adivasi* people of Jharkhand are descendants of an earlier indigenous society. The descendants of those peoples may be seen in the wide variety of artisan classes, many of whom have been hinduized, such as the Ranas, Telis, Prajapatis, Turis, Malars, Kurmis, etc. now classed as Scheduled Castes.

When the tribes were driven back from northern India after their defeat in the Bharata war, the artisan castes followed them. Of this exodus from Hastinapura the Kuru capital, Romesh Ch. Dutt has written at the close of the Bharata war and Dhritarashtra's farewell to his beloved capital with his wife Gandhari and their widowed daughter-inlaws,



**“With this troop of wailing women, deep in woe,disconsolate,  
Slow the monarch of the Kurus passed Hastina’s outer gate,  
Men from stall and loom and anvil, men of every guild and trade ,  
Left the city with the monarch, through the open country strayed,”**

*(Romesh Ch.Dutt, Maha- Bharata, Epic of the Bharatas, Book XI,I)*

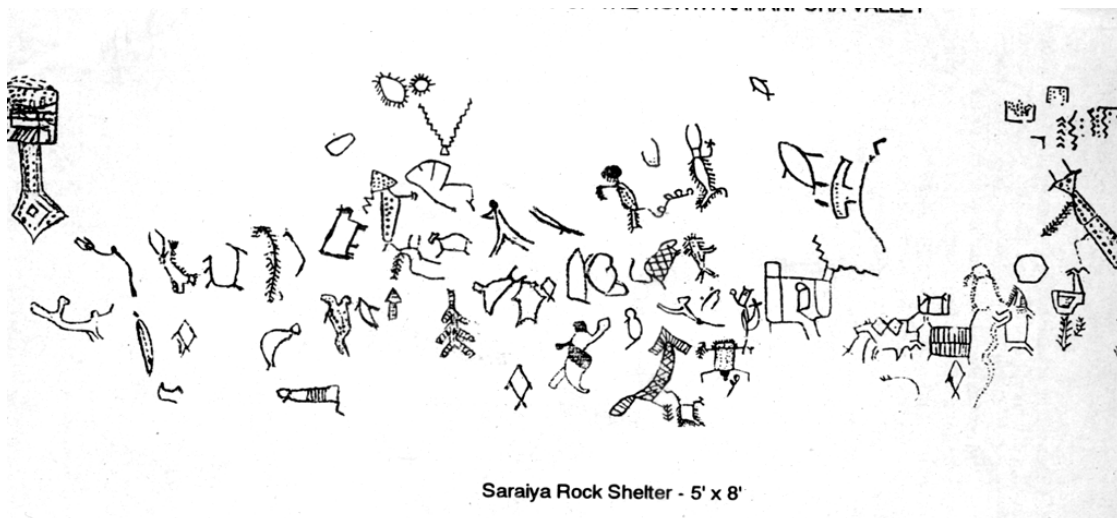
It may here be clarified that the artisan classes have traditionally been adjuncts of tribal societies and even today you may find the carpenter or *barhi*, the lohra or *ironsmith*, the malar or *metal caster*, the potter or *kumhar* close alongside the *adivasis*. These artisan classes were appropriated to themselves by the Aryans in their nomadic journeys through tribal lands from the Caucasus to the Ganges valley, and were slowly brahminized.

The Lohras still work iron and the Malars still move about nomadically tinsmithing and casting household utensils and deities by a lost-wax process *cere-perdure* using resin and clay moulds. These people are the direct descendants of the earlier copper and bronze-working societies. The bronze pipe found at a depth of two feet in the field of Sohan Munda in Isco was given to the Bihar Archaeology department by me in 1991. It was to be put in the Patna Museum. Apart from the Mundas and Santals whom anthropologists believe moved in to the region around the middle of the first millennium BC, the earliest migrant people were the megalith builders, a cult phenomenon which as I have pointed out links the Northeast via the Chotanagpur plateau with the Deccan and South India to Ceylon, as far back as 5000 BC. Jharkhand was inhabited by the *Adivasis* even at this time as attested to by the Neolithic and palaeolithic sites, going right back to the close of the last ice age 20-15,000 years ago, and a high Neolithic may have existed in the Damodar valley as far back as ten thousand years ago. We can incontrovertibly prove that prior to these megalith builders' arrival society was flourishing in Jharkhand. In the Damodar valley prehistoric man had laid the tapestry of earliest human beginnings. We have seen the researches of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, of P.R.Sarkar in the lower parts of the Damodar valley, and a palaeolithic tool found by Hughes in the Bokaro coalfield (V.Ball, Stone Implements found in Bengal, *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1865,pp.127-128) is a boucher made of micaceous quartzite now kept in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. At Bargunda was found a copper celt as well as a

copper armband (Robert Bruce Foote, *The Foote Collection of Indian Pre-historic and Proto-historic Antiquities*, 1914, p.248), now in the Madras Government Museum. In Pachamba in Giridih district three flat copper celts were found which are also now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta (J.Goggin Brown, *Catalogue of Pre-historic Antiquities in the Indian Museum*, pages 140 ff.). It is sad to remark that in the Bihar District Gazetteers, Hazaribagh, by P.C.Roy Choudhury, 1957, it has been remarked that “ The remains on Kulua and Parasnath Hills are of recent date and do not come under the purview of archaeology.” These are among the oldest, most priceless sites of Jaina archaeology. This attitude has been consistent with the destruction of the religious relics of Jharkhand after Independence.

P.R.Sarkar's researches in the lower Damodar valley, of myself in the upper valley of this same river, and the excavations of S.C.Roy in Ranchi plateau, form a complete canvas for portraying the prehistory of the Jharkhand region. While Sarkar's collection goes back to the Middle palaeolithic, the upper valley of river Damodar has yielded a horsehoof hammerstone earlier referred to which has been dated to 450,000 BP, and pebble chopper tools as old as a million years have been found, going back to the dawn of man. This was found along with other such stone tools near Isco in the easternmost end of the valley. Isco has perhaps the most complete evidence of human evolution anywhere in the world. Its location 40 kilometres south of Hazaribagh Town is singularly important in view of the fact that such great sites of early man are found worldwide in such location in relation to a developed township, such as for example, Jimmum SE of Darwin, site of 150,000 year-old cupules; Site of *Sinanthropus man* in China SW of Peking in the Choukutien Hills, which was discovered by Davidson Black in 1929; Site of *Zinjanthropus man* South of Nairobi in Olduvai gorge discovered by Mary Leakey; Site of Early Man in Pecos Pueblo SW of Santa Fe city in North Mexico; Site of Early Man in Reese River valley South of Austin City, Nevada; Isco, SE of Hazaribagh Town in the North Karanpura valley brought to light by me; Bhimbetka famed for its prehistoric rock art South of Bhopal city brought to light by Wakankar; Tepe Garwa Northeast of Mosul or Ancient Nineveh in Iraqui Kurdistan (Mesopotamia).

On the vertical and steep scarps of the edges of Hazaribagh's verdant plateau lie the serried ages of human antiquity buried under the sediment of a rising plateau driven upward by

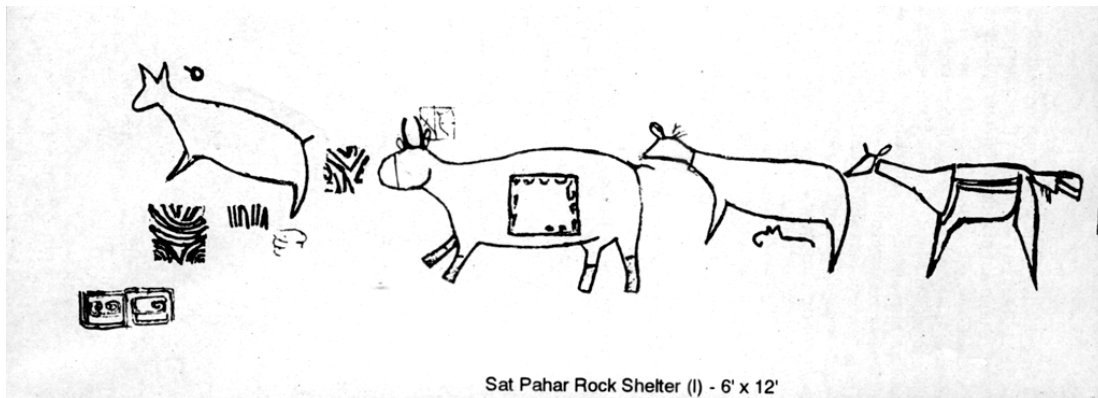


continental drift, while crumbling at its edges into the rift valley of North Karanpura it reveals those beds of gravels and loess and conglomerate which house the prehistory of our race. North of the Isco village at a height of about two hundred feet above the floor of the



valley we find the Pleistocene in which single and biface manuport chopper stone pebble tools are found as old as one million years perhaps. Such a phenomenon was earlier marked in the Olduvai gorge in Tanzania in the Rift Valley where Dr.Mary Leakey found the fossil remains of oldest man fifty years ago. As I have earlier pointed out, the presence of this layer with a pebbled shoreline on which we find the stone tools of Acheulian man emerged at 50,000 years back. This coincidence is understood when we find that the pebbles were part of an earlier age and not part of the smaller pebbles constituting the shoreline of a lake formed by the valley sides, closed in on the eastern side by the Sati Hills. The lake was fed from the western end linked to the floodplain of the North Koel and Sone rivers where they meet beyond Japla. Here an ancient archaeological site dated around 1500 BC has recently been brought to light at Kabrakila ten kilometers west of Japla.

In the prehistoric rockart of the Satpahars images have been painted whose dating was done by Dr Erwin Neumayer of Vienna. The legs of the deer painted in these images, so similar to the deer of the Kaimurs in Mirzapur district, *show banded ends* which are due to the ice age in which the pointed hooves of the deer were buried in the snow and therefore not visible. This is typical of all art from glacial periods. Compare the deer at right hand side with deer in the centre of Likhanya rockart panel, from Mirzapur illustrated ahead .(Opp.p. 32)



These rockart sites have also yielded the oldest evidence as yet found of a horned human deity with anthropomorphic characteristics which is vital to the understanding of the horned god of the tribal early world – Singh-bonga, literally translated as Singh: horn, Bonga:god. This deity preceded the archetype of the horned yogi figure of AN in the Mohenjo-Daro seal. Thus the proto-Harappan horned god emerges before us in the rockart of Saraiya (10,000BC) in the southern face of the Satpahar range in the western North Karanpura valley.

The local people of the region are largely Oraons, Mundas, Kurmalis, and the artisan semi-hinduized castes. Their ancestors were obviously linked with the people whose presence is indicated as living in the Satpahars before the time of settled agriculture, nor should this seem to be in any manner surprising on the basis of the evidence.They have left behind clear evidence of their occupation in the microlithic and other stone tools such as flakers, strippers, points, cleavers, burins, hand-axes and haft axes, adzes, strippers and hammerstones. The chronology of their occupation may be dated through the analysis of their rockart. On the basis of Dr.Neumayer's dating their art was definitely anterior to 6000 BC and in the opinion of other scholars some of their art is as old as 10,000 BC. This is a conservative estimate, since much of the, lower layers have been overpainted and are not properly visible. These datings are above reproach since they come from a world renowned authority.



*1. Wheeled and spotted Ghoda from Isco rockart*



*Hazaribagh stone tools*



The people who made the rockart could not have dissolved into air. Their genes must flow in their descendants in the region. Their descendants can not be seen as having been exterminated or wiped out since there is no evidence for this, and it must be accepted that the people who painted the rockart shelters must be the same people whose descendants inhabit the North Karanpura valley till today, who must be treated as indigenous societies. This status has to be considered in the almost forcible acquisition of tribal lands being done today in face of the mining and industrial development of the North Karanpura valley.

There is evidence in Jharkhand that the prehistoric period has not come to an end because of the primitive lifestyles still evidenced by, 1. agricultural communities partly dependant upon forest produce 2. hunting tribes partly dependant on agriculture for their survival 3. purely hunter-gatherer tribes like the Birhor who do not do any agriculture 4. an advanced exchange economy which has remained outside of the market economy, and whose produce can not figure in the nation's Gross Domestic Product, and whose income cannot be tabulated in the nation's Per Capita Income. Tribes such as the Birhors and Malars or metal casters remain nomadic although some settled occupation is seen among segments of both tribes like the *Jagghi* Birhors. Other wild forest tribes on the fringes of Jharkhand include the Juang and Korwa. The close of a prehistoric period might be quite contemporary, or as in the case of ancient Egypt it could have occurred many thousands of years back. For example it occurred much earlier in Egypt than in Lapland and has continued in the tropical zone much longer than in the temperate, which is why we have more existing primitive groups in Africa, West Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Australia, South America, than in the Northern temperate zones such as in North America, Europe and Central Asia. We have documents from the bronze age civilization of the Aegean when India was in a largely more primitive state, yet witnessed such advanced cultures as Harappan and Jharkhand chalcolithic cultures. In India it was, however, their fatal lot that our indigenous civilization faced the obliteration of their records at the hands of the Aryans, Buddhists and Muslims, and tribal India has not been able to bring forth the evidence for its ancient achievements which were none less than the Aegean civilizations in any way, and on the basis of the Harappan and Jharkhand achievements of a higher refinement and extent. Prehistory is more closely related with geology and the "ages of earth" since the topography of the earth has been constantly changing over long periods of time along with the movement and evolution of human societies, and attention to this requires to be paid by future researchers in the hilly regions such as the Jharkhand plateau.

Modern primitive societies such as the Birhors have an exceedingly complex socio-cultural and religious structure and give us an idea of the complexity of the early societies upon whom civilizations were built, and who made the prehistoric rockart. It is significant that the Birhors themselves claim that the rockart of North Karanpura was painted by their ancestors, while the Mundas also claim this. This gives us an idea of the societies which made the rock paintings, stone tools, and rough red pottery whose pieces litter the cave shelters where rockart is found in Hazaribagh and Chatra districts. (It may be noted that the Satpahar range of the western North Karanpura valley used to be part of the Hazaribagh district and now comes under the new district of Chatra). The users of stone implements such as stone axes and flint knives and chert and quartz microliths had a much more complex social and religious organization than some think. If we compare a primitive example such as the Birhors we find out the way those early societies must have thought and lived, which is similar to contemporary villagers throughout the region even today. The difference is that the

Birhor have a peculiar world-view which the average villager of today might have some difficulty appreciating and because of which the Birhors are considered backward. As we move up the scale of social development our view of such tribes as the Birhor becomes consistently biased and a point comes when socially more advanced societies consider them to be uncivilized, although their own existential predicament is not so far removed from the Birhor level of society. When we contemplate the terrible dislocation of these primitive societies from their age-old lifestyle and world-view we must be cautioned; the concept of civilization by more advanced and therefore more complex social systems has little to do with the evolution of human fulfillment or spiritual and psychological advancement in our species. Infact the Birhors are at a higher level of social advancement than their village and town peers.

In less complex societies there is ample evidence of the existence of a more highly developed faculty in the senses, even the sixth sense or instinct, which is gradually marginalized by mental and material complexity necessary to higher social orders of organization. The evidence of human anatomy over the past fifty thousand years shows humans unchanged. Primitive societies tend towards a stockier build and darker complexion, both of which are associated with a tropical jungle environment. Even higher orders of society in the tropics manifest these same characteristics.

During the ice ages deep caves afforded a source of warmth and protection and several families sometimes lived in a big cave such as the underground Marwateri cave in Isco, safe from the cold. Drinking water was clean and easily available closeby. Many of these first habitations, which were the first sedentarized evidence of early man, were located along the edge of vast expanses of water and were fishing settlements, evidenced sometimes by bone or stone hooks, when spliced intestines would have been dried and used for string as well as long fibres of jungle creepers such as the chope (*Bauhinia scandens*) still used for making string by the Birhors. Humans upto this time had been living a nomadic hunter-gatherer existence such as is displayed by the Birhors today, moving from place to place, living in rude leaf houses, and distributing their stress upon the game and jungle produce in a roughly circulatory movement. The next most primitive society after the Birhor would be the early fishing peoples whose remnants would be such primitive protoaustraloid tribes as the Macchwas of Chaibasa, a fishing community. These primitive ways of life prior to sedentarization may be studied in the lifestyle of the Birhors, Macchwas, and Bhuiyas even today. The earlier stage of human organization would have been displayed when these were purely hunting societies when they would have been completely forest dwelling, semi arboreal types, without any dwellings, living solely on animals killed, or roots and tubers gathered by the womenfolk, a close example of which is the Birhor today. As society settled down by the waterside in the caves where the first rockart is found, the womenfolk had more time to experiment with foodgathering and growing plants from seeds of wild fruits and plants. Thus we find the bean appearing as the first plant domesticated by humans. The caves of Isco are a good place to observe the environment in which the first sedentarized societies began. Small hollows for grinding grains (fairy mills) are found in the rock floor. The Marwateri cave covers a couple of hectares underground and beneath a vast expanse of rock about two kilometers east of the rockart shelter in Isco. This vast cavernous underground dwelling-place of early humans has yielded dark black, heavy stone tools of the middle palaeolithic age (50,000 BC). It has also given us heavy hand-axes, hammer-stones, smaller finely made one-sided hand-axes, points, cleavers, burins and leaf blades. It has also yielded

a variety of semi-ground ochres and chalks once used for rock-painting. In its deeper recesses tool-kits of early man have been found wherein there are an assortment of stone tools. This cave has tunnels going under the Isco hill, and local legend tells of two Birhor hunters who had got lost inside this warren of underground caves while chasing a hare, and who lost their way. Eventually they found themselves trapped, and their voices could be heard calling for help a kilometre away near the crevasse of the Isco rockart. Eventually, unable to come out, they called to their companions to go away and leave them to die. This tragic tale is still told in the village of Isco and must be one of the great true stories of prehistory. In the Marwadwar cave about half a kilometre east of Marwateri, there is another deep cave, whose portals have been cut in arches and was used as a rude temple from earliest times. The story attached to this is that it once was a shrine, and Khaita Munda of Isco when he was alive showed it to me and my wife Philomena first (along with Marwateri), and told us he had been right inside to where a large cavern contained idols. However, the cave was filled with sand, supposedly in the 17th or 18th century by one of the Rajas at Badam, and has not been used since. A lone peepul tree (*Ficus religiosa*) standing today in front of the cave attests to the date. In the legend still told in Isco the Raja had been married in the *kohvar* painted in the cave where we find the great rockart of Isco, and that subsequently the Rani and he had come to Isco on an elephant, when the Rani had been carried on a wooden palanquin to a pool in the Isco river to bathe, where she drowned. This river rises in the Marwateri cave itself. The villagers of Isco still say that pieces of wood found in this beautiful pool under a huge rocky escarpment belong to that palanquin. The Raja, brokenhearted, had the Marwadwar cave closed in with sand. The song sung by the Munda villagers of Isco goes like this,

### Song of the Rani of Isco

*The king sat in the Kohvar. Then the king went from there.  
At Isco was the king sitting. The king took the queen to the Badam fort.  
Then he brought her back to bathe in the Isco river !  
On a palanquin, accompanied by many kings, he brought the queen,  
The queen came to Isco riding on an elephant,  
On a wooden palanquin she was carried to the pool in the Isco river,  
Oh! The queen drowned then – the king was broken-hearted.  
He went away to build a new fort, and only the Kohvar remained.*

Note to place names above mentioned may be as follows-

Isco derives its name from **Ays** meaning copper or iron in a crude state; **Kho** meaning a cave among the tribals; **Marwa** means a place where the marriage ceremony takes place; **Dwar** is a doorway; **Teri** means “nearby to” ; thus, Marwadwar is the name of a rock-hewn temple in the jungle at Isco , nearby to a very big underground cave containing vast amount of palaeolithic stone tools called Marwateri, which I translate to mean the place close to the Marwa or marriage spot. This is important in view of the fact the Isco Khovar is within a kilometre from it. Khovar, the magic name given to the bridal room throughout northern India, derives from **Kho** meaning cave , and **Var** meaning the bridal couple. The term **Khovar** is applied to denote a rockart site throughout the Vindhya, Satpahars and Kaimur Ranges. **Bihar** derives its meaning from **Biha** meaning marriage, which is a amayana tradition, and this is perhaps pointed out for the first time. The connection with Vihara or monastery, was Nehru’s personal interpretation.



*Parvati Devi making welcome aripan for the cattle in Sohrai Puja, Bhelwara, Hazaribagh*



*Wall mural, Bhelwara  
Pashupati, Lord of Animals, on Ghoda. Middle six petaled Animal Wheel. Left Mother Goddess, right Shiva.*

The history of that king, now called the Ramgarh Raja, continues from the new fort which he built at Ramgarh. The Ramgarh family moved its residence thrice after this, once to Ramgarh, then to the village of Ichak about ten kilometers north of the Hazaribagh town, and finally to its present residence in the palace at Padma a further twenty kilometers on the road to Patna from Hazaribagh town. The Kohvar built at Padma for the wedding of one of the Rajas contains in the middle of the steps leading up to it from the east side a stone frieze taken from the similar design in the rockart at Isco in the extreme right hand panel. The Isco rockart as I have pointed out earlier, contains stone tools ranging from microliths of the Mesolithic, and of the Vindhyan kind, used principally for surgery, to the finely polished stone axes or celts of the Neolithic period. It is an open cave overlooking a vast rocky expanse lined with small holes on the floor used initially for making fire, found also before almost all rockart sites and known in Europe as fairy mills or *elfin-mueller*, and from it, at a height of about two hundred feet above the valley floor, one can view the entire sweep of the North Karanpura valley to the west. This cobra-hooded rocky formation is the quintessence of what a palaeolithic emergence human site on a lake fishing settlement was. Differential weathering in the distant past had produced these cobra-hooded protrusions inside which the thirty-foot high sandstone is covered with what rockart specialist Dr. Erwin Neumayer has termed “ The greatest rockart panel of eastern India.” The shelter is open to the southwest and receives the late afternoon sun. Its western edge would have lapped the edges of the lake during the palaeolithic. The floor of the cave has yielded fine pointed microliths, the corestones from which they have been chipped off, and the small, heavy cylindrical hammerstones used for chipping them from the mother core. Here my wife Philomena found a sharp, highly polished axehead of the square shouldered celt typical of the Southeast-Asian-Timor-Australia variety. It still bears the marks of hafting and hard use. It is in our museum. The rockart, in red haematite, sometimes outlined in white, has images of a wheeled spotted animal identical to the *ghoda* or horse still painted by the village women in the Sohrai art of Bhelwara today. This spotted animal on wheels may be noted in the Isco rockart at the bottom of the panel immediately to the right of the central panel here in our illustration placed at the top righthand side for purposes of illustration. The length of this rockart is 83’ 2” , divided into four panels, about thirty feet in height over a curved overhang. It is remarkably well protected. The symbols painted on it covers the entire lexicon of the valley’s contemporary village art of Kohvar and Sohrai house wall painting, proving the ancestry of the village art to at least a Neolithic strata in 4000-2000 BC, about which there is no disagreement among experts. Today there is a living evidence of this wall painting culture during the harvest and marriage seasons as I will describe. The harvest art is the reconstruction of a Neolithic agricultural phenomenon from a time when the first farming communities began settled rice cultivation in plots carved out of the dense forests of *saal* (*shorea robusta*). The visitor interested to see this living art may arrive around the Divali festival in Hazaribagh and proceed east to the Bhelwara village about fortyfive kilometers on the way to the Grand Trunk road at Bagodar. Here we will find on the day after Divali the cattle being propitiated in the Sohrai Puja. This village has become justly famous for its great wall-paintings done all over the house walls throughout the village using natural earth ochres. It is significant that the welcome of the cattle celebrates the return of Rama in the form of Pashupati. It is not a Hindu festival and does not appear in the Hindu calendar. These villagers do not celebrate Divali. They are Kurmis, of that same rugged stock which lost its lands and forests in Manbhum, about whom I have spoken elsewhere in this book. In the morning the village cattle have been released from the cattle-pens at dawn and taken out to the jungles. Around midday they will return with the cowherders or *ahirs* as they are called.



*Shiva, (Parvati Devi, Bhelwara)*



*Wheeled and spotted Ghoda from Bhelwara*



Everything about this festivity is mysterious and interesting. In the meanwhile, the women who have painted the walls with images of bulls and so-called Ghoda or horse, are now preparing the welcome aripans made on the floors by dripping liquid white rice flour paste and milk in ritual symbolic designs of circles with rows of lines running through them to a trident head of a bull at the doorway in the middle of which is placed the small cone of *lathlateya* grass the symbol of the two upright pigtails of the ancient mother goddess --- similar to the Mesopotamian symbol.

### **Pashupati**

*When the oil lamps of Divali are over,  
Then the Lord of the Animals -- Pashupati,  
Comes home on the backs of the cattle  
From the jungle.*

The day after the Sohrai Puja day is the Khuta Bandhan Puja day in which there are a series of mock bull-fights performed on the village crossroads by the three wise men called Pujaris, who sing to the bull as they taunt it. Note that they refer to it as a cow, never a bull. This is the matriarchal tradition.

*Where have I seen such a beautiful horse ?  
Where have I seen such a beautiful cow ?  
Where have I seen such a beautiful family ?  
You are the beautiful sacrificial cow.  
Such a beautiful horse, such a beautiful cow,  
Such a beautiful family, such a beautiful cow,  
Such a beautiful horse, such a beautiful cow,  
Such a beautiful family cow.*

The wheeled spotted figure of the Sohrai Ghoda in the Mesolithic rockart of Isco is the greatest evidence of the continuance of a chalcolithic tradition in Sohrai art. Similar evidence of common rockart and village painting has been found in Khovar art as well, and hundreds of common features have been identified. Perhaps this is the greatest proof of indigeneity available, and has been the subject of the scrutiny of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva, and a Dossier has been published recently on it by FIAN, Germany. The symbols and designs painted in Isco include as I have remarked earlier, ninety-five characters of the Indus script. These characters also appear in the valley's Kohvar art along with famous Indus symbols such as bull and feeding trough, elephant and feeding trough, animal wheel, etc. The discovery of Isco in 1991 was through a report from my friend Tony Herbert that he had heard a rockart site existed in the hills above Isco. I believe some other Australian may have visited and even photographed the rockart earlier. Anyway, it was well known to the local villagers when I found it, but not much attention was paid to it. Since then I have instituted an annual fair at Isco every year on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January, Republic Day, and this is a great local event now. For India's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a Republic in 1997, the state of Bihar asked me to design a float tableau on this rockart site, showing its effect on the tribal art of the region and the distant art of the women of Madhubani, which I did. My eldest son, Justin, carried out the project and went to Delhi and made the float tableau which took part in the National Republic Day Parade and received a shield from the President of India.

Isco has been visited by leading archaeologists including Dr. Erwin Neumayer and Dr. S. B. Ota, Dr. Prakash Charan Prasad of the Bihar Archaeology Department (retired), Dr. D. K. Bhattacharya, Delhi University, and others from Deccan College, Pune, Banaras Hindu University, Indian Museum, Calcutta, Etc. The date of the topmost art layer is put by Neumayer at the meso-chalcolithic which is the period when the microlithic age was giving way to the copper age, and according to my understanding of Neumayer's dating is between 5000 and 2000 BC. It is important to note that the painting shows evidence of a lower layer. This could be as far back as ten thousand years old.

The origin of the idea of the Kohvar is important to understand in gaining an insight into the mind-view of people still living their age-old lifestyles in the valley in the face of mind-blowing development initiatives such as global advertising through the television and the plan to mine the entire valley for coal. The psychological displacement of these societies is even more traumatic than the physical. The Kohvar tradition is the foundation of the Hindu marriage room. It is traditionally decorated with symbols of fertility such as plants, leaves, trees, etc. This art is linked with a geometrical plethora of mandalas, chowks, and other symbols of the mother goddess including the yoni or female genital, triangle, circle, concentric circle, lozenge, star, lotus, Etc. It is a primitive belief that a married couple must go for the first night of their marriage to a cave in the jungle, and Elwin had observed in his book on the Baiga, "It was formerly the tradition that the newly-married couple must not consummate the marriage in a house, but spend their first night together in the jungle." (V. Elwin, *The Baiga*, John Murray, London, 1939, p.279). The Birhors also follow this tradition, which is familiar to all the tribes. The bridal room and its decoration is familiar to Spain also. The great annual hunts which take place among our tribes are similar to the traditional hunts with dogs in Spain. And the earliest tradition of the Spanish bullfight, the loosening of bulls in the village roads, may be traced to the Khuta Bandhan of the Sohrai harvest festival of the Kurmis in Hazaribagh. The link between our regions of India and the Iberian peninsular have been well authenticated by Father Heras, as well as from the writings of St. Isidore of Seville in the 7<sup>th</sup> century (*Etymologiarum Libri XX*). It may be noted that there are actually one thousand codices of the *Etymologies* still extant, and it is calculated that ten thousand codices existed in the Mediaeval period. St. Isidore was a Spanish monk who became Archbishop of Seville, and collected the then known writings of the world to complete his *Etymologies*.

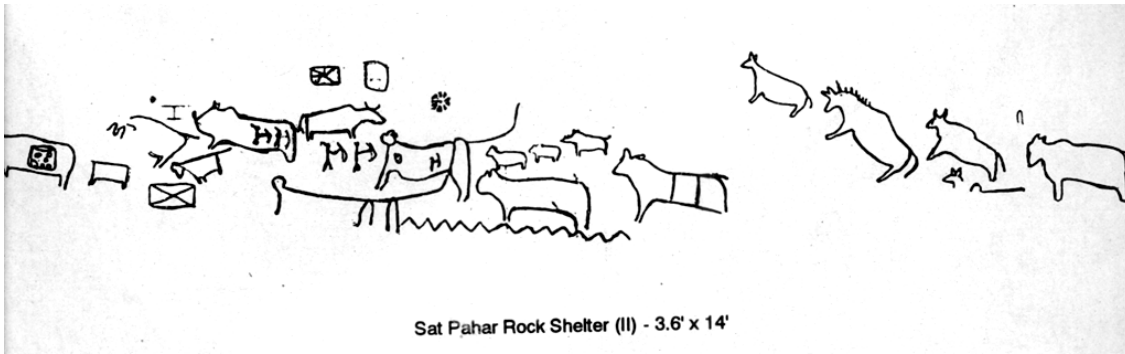
I propose, (1) A connection between the prehistoric cave dwellers of the palaeolithic period and the people who painted the caves, (2) A further connection between the people who painted the caves and the *Adivasi* people who became the forest tribes and agricultural societies now living in the villages of the valley and the forested Hazaribagh plateau, (3) The belief that megalith builders were a Munda people who came in via the Northeast as far back as five thousand years ago and moved on and occupied south Jharkhand in the Ranchi plateau where to this day they still continue their megalithic tradition. The present megalith building tradition is in honour of the dead and follows a well-known tradition. While the megalithic phenomenon is known for mother goddess worship and its propitiation through circular and triangular formations representing *yonis* and phallic importance in certain megaliths, and alignments of intersecting lines called *chowks* that are held sacred. No phallic worship is found among the tribal people today in association with these stones and it is believed that the significance of phallic worship was Hinduized. By identifying Siva with the phallic symbol or *linga* the Puranic composers absorbed the lesser known local deities

worshipped by the tribes as a conical-shaped stone (yoni) representing the mother goddess. According to the Puranic myth Sivas lingam dropped down as curse of the sages of Daruvana whose wives Siva is supposed to have chased. As such Siva worship started. It is a tradition that had faced the Jaina, Buddhist, Hindu, and Islamic views long before the arrival of Christianity in the area in the nineteenth century. However, a long and ancient tradition cannot be severed so easily and in certain pockets its oscillation to previous levels of ethnicity is bound to manifest if we search for these. This tells us about the real culture of the people who have been supposed to have been developed. Further it may be pointed out that the Oraons as we have seen had direct contacts with Harappa via the Narmada valley. Although both Mahavira Barddhamana and Gautama Buddha had passed through Jharkhand the region remained essentially tribal, and remains so till today. The rock glypt of a rhinoceros in the first panel (left side) in Isco has been the subject of interest. It shows a period in the not too distant past, perhaps three or four thousand years back, when rhinoceros roamed the North and South Karanpura valley. The presence of the Bengal Francolin in the Ganju sohrai painting has drawn speculatuion that it is a tradition pointing back to a time when this bird was found in Hazaribagh. The presence of both the Neolithic shouldered celt as well as the Veddaic celt points to a connection between the Neolithic peoples of Hazaribagh with Southeast-Asia-Timor/Australia on one side as proposed by Heine-Geldern in the Fifties, and on the other with the Veddas of Ceylon. The megalithic migration from the Northeast, we may remember, passed through Jharkhand on its way to Madhya Pradesh and the Deccan Plateau, finally reaching South India and Ceylon. I will deal with this later on, when I write about the Southeast Asian culture contacts with the Northeast, and megalithic migrations from that region. The earliest reference to tubes comes from the Puranas and Epics. Some are shown as friendly, others are depicted as demons. The overcoming of the tribals by the brahmanical culture is the story of the Puranas, Mahabharata, and other Epic literature of India. What happened in those far off days is the same main-streaming of tribals in an essentially brahmanical or Hindu over-structure, which has slowly grown over two millennia of mainstreaming tribal groups in India. Even today Scheduled Tribes are being turned into Scheduled Castes in exchange for certain privileges. That tribals are a defenseless minority in India is never doubted, that they are out of the mainstream Hindu culture is also known. Asura kings like Jarasandha, Bhagadatha, and Kamsa were accepted by the Hindu rulers as Kshattriya's, despite their tribal matriarchal tradition along with the Daityas and Danavas. It was through such alliances Aryavarta was extended into East India. Puranic and Epic references to the Nagas as the jungle tribes of Jharkhand and Bastar is known. But what is not so well known is that there is no reference to the Nagas or serpent race in the Rig Veda, which can only mean that the Aryans had not encountered them since they were indigenous dwellers of central and eastern India. The Garudas or bird people were descendants of the same grand mother as the Nagas and hence, a great inter-tribal rivalry was born between the Garudas and the Nagas. There is no mention to it in a racial context to India in the Rig Veda, although the rivalry of the serpent and the eagle was prominent in Mesopotamian-Sumerian Civilization with which the Vedic Aryans were closely connected. On the other hand such tribes as the proto Austroloid Mundas in Jharkhand practiced a deep snake cult similar to the Aboriginals of Northwestern Australia. The Munda rainbow snake is the Lorbung and that of the Aboriginals is Borlung. The contest between the bird Ngak Ngak, the sea eagle, and the two snakes Garimala is an old Aboriginal tradition in Australia. How this tradition could exist in such close parallel in both India, Australia, and West Asia and still not find a reference to in the Rig Veda makes it quite clear that our far eastern traditions were a forgotten, unknown source of the West Asian traditions even at the time of the composition of the Rig Veda.



*Khovar painting of Jorakath village*

The *Ramayana* is a very ancient tribal tradition found among almost all the tribes, and many are who believe Chotanagpur plateau to have been the Dandak forests to which Rama was banished, *dandak* referring to the stick-like Saal trees (*Shorea robusta*) found in the region, since in the *Ramayana* the course of Rama's journey eastward via Sutikshna's ashrama came to the junction of the Koel and Sone Rivers. Earlier, when Rama had come to fight the Rakshasas in this region with the sage Viscwamitra, he had come to the same region, from where the road north led to his future wife Sita's homeland, Videha, and from where south the way led along the Koel and Damodar valleys into the heart of Jharkhand via the river valleys. The *Ramayana* tradition is older than the Vedas themselves. The tribal Rama Chandra was a courtly figure roving in the forests of Jharkhand found in the traditions of the Birhors and other tribes. The proper order has been reversed, even as happened in the rewriting of the Vedas, and our account of the Mahabharata war. The fact that history is written by the victors is always axiomatic. Thus, when Rama was we are told fighting the Rakshasas, in the original version of the tribals, Rama Chandra was in fact a tribal hero fighting the invaders. Even now the uprisings of tribal heroes against the outsiders whom they call *dikku* takes place, for we must not forget India was originally tribal and all who came after the original *adivasi* inhabitants were *dikku*, outsiders. In the Hindu version Rama has been made an avatara of Vishnu, but this is questioned in the light of tribal oral traditions. The tribals kill and eat monkeys and the Birhors have attained fame in the past as monkey catchers. In the Bharata war Arjuna's standard carried the monkey whereas that of Bhishma was the date-palm, a West Asian motif. The two great epic poems of India the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* are comparable to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Greece and the tradition would seem to have an ancient tribal common source. According to the Hindu view the *Ramayana* takes its story from an episode in the Mahabharata. This is questionable since the *Ramayana* is a vastly older tribal tradition. The ancient world was one of emergent societies and wars for lands in the advent of an agricultural civilization. Great epics evolved out of these conflicts between an older order and a newer one. Ancient India was tribal much as ancient Europe was, and the conflict between the short, dark aboriginal and the tall, fair complexioned Aryan was bitter and long. In the evacuation of Hastinapur in the advent of the Bharata war and the falling eastward of the Kuru tribes a large number of tribes of Kol and Munda society were found whose names have been forgotten to history and are merely found as names of Mundas and their allied tribes such as Chedi, Matsya, Bhoja, Kasi, and in-fact many tribal totem names today used in different tribes were once the names of distinct tribes at the time of the Bharata war. In the rockart of Sat-Pahar II illustrated above in the western North Karanpura valley we find a primitive version of that confrontation pointed out in the rock paintings of Likhanya in the Kaimur range of Mirzapur district which I will shortly describe in detail. This scene in the Satpahars in western North Karanpura depicts hunters attacking a langur monkey which has killed and devoured one of them. It is an important panel of wild animals including the rhinoceros, bison, wild buffalo, langur monkey, tiger and tigress, wild boar, jackal, nilgai, and hunters. This rock-art also displays x-ray drawing and the *chouk* with crossed diagonals in square which is the oldest sign in rockart and forms the basis of the Hindu *mandala*. It is ten thousand years old in this rockart from the Satpahars.





Once again I refer to Jagdish Singh's observation on the settlement geography of the Damodar Valley, "In the absence of any recorded history, the tribal people are believed to be original and earliest settlers of this land, who came from west and north-west." (*Ibid*, P.13). This statement is inaccurate in view of the palaeolithic ancestry of the tribals evidenced from the archaeology of the region which, as I have abundantly shown, carries the traces of the tribals' ancestors not merely to the chalcolithic or Mesolithic age but to the dim and distant time-frames of the palaeolithic ! It has been projected by some scholars that the tribals who originally inhabited the Ganges and Sone valleys fell back into Jharkhand on the impact of brahminism in those regions and this statement is only partly correct in the light of the fact that Palamau had Kol, Chero and Kharwar presence long before the advent of the Hindus in the Ganges valley. This supposition that a semi tribal culture consisting of semi-Hinduized Kols, Cheros and Kharwars fell back upon the Palamu region in antiquity is to say that from early times the region was infused with Hindu culture, which is incorrect.

While race and language are distinct entities, and neither can prove the other, the language of Jharkhand has to be seen as distinctly tribal from earliest times to the present and the non tribal languages spoken by the *dikku* have to be seen as distinct from the culture of the tribals. When we talk about a culture and its identifying factors we are referring not only to its relics but to its living people who carry the customs, crafts, language, traditions, and abilities of their race. A civilization denotes a larger unit than a culture and may infact comprise *several cultures*. The civilizing process itself is a danger to cultural identity through homogenization, which is an outward impact as opposed to miscegenation, which is a phenomenon of inward growth, evolution and social stability. Unity through diversity by miscegenation is a positive principle, whereas unity enforced from outside which produces homogeneity is a negative principle. The homegenization of tribal cultures into the Hindu mainstream is the continuance of the Aryan invasion in India, and has always represented brahminism and nationalism, which both Gandhi-ji and Rabindranath Tagore warned against. The Hinduizing of tribals through civilizing of them according to the paradigms of its own brahminical system is a threat to true democracy. The evils of Fascism in Germany during the last world war are an icon of shame and the Swiss denial of asylum to Gypsies who were thereby massacred by Hitler is conveniently forgotten. The sword of Islam which forced conversion, and the terror struck in China by Mao, and the Catholic Inquisition in Europe, and the rape of South America are blemishes in their history. The coercion of any people into a mainstream is always subject to scrutiny by history, and the rape of tribal lands does not go forgotten. If through civilizing peoples of ethnic stock alone it is sought to justify their development, then the paradigms of that process must one day be called to question. If a tribal culture loses its identity what is left of it, even if it belongs to the mainstream culture of the nation? Indeed a nation employing such principles would be seen as a fascist state. The fascist face of capitalist industrialism is baring itself in the West today, and openly accepted by western scholars as a social depravity. The white man's rape of indigenous property and attack on tribes in North America, South Africa, New Zeland and Australia, are well known.

Such distinct cultures as tribals and primitive ethnic groups do not fall within the definition of the mainstream culture and are therefore criticized as being uncivilized. Infact, civilization has no cultural description, but is anathema to culture itself, and its purpose is to fragment cultural groups who hold vast natural resources under their control. Traditionally, tribal cultures have held the most valuable portions of land and forest and their natural resources, which are a residue of their own ancient ages of greatness and control in the past. Slowly the

non tribals realized the wealth and power which could accrue from control of these resources and contrived to dispossess tribals of these assets and so devised nationalism as a tool to prey upon the tribal holdings. Over the past half millennium the world has witnessed the most vicious attacks on the tribals and their ancestral holdings which led to European colonial expansion as seen in the Americas, Australia, Africa and India. The same principle has underwritten the Aryan domination and exploitation of the Indian subcontinent. The advent of Shankaracharya in Chotanagpur led to the phenomenon of the Tana Bhagat movement. Large numbers of tribals, Oraons in particular, were converted to Hinduism. In such families today there is a struggle between the Hindu and the tribal way. The same thing happened with the coming of Christianity in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The conversion of Stanley Lievens, SJ are legendary.

Culture is a particular identity occurring at different places at different times, not always connected through migrations or other forms of direct contact, reflecting similar manifestations or “age of the world”, and peoples of these diverse cultures share a common bond, usually formed by a common environment. Each culture is aware who belongs to it and who does not. In this way culture is beyond distinctions of race, colour, creed or caste. When one culture rejects another it is like the body rejecting the wrong blood-group. It is beyond argument, it is biological and post-chemical. To put it in a literary context we may remember Shakespeare’s grave admonition, “Unto the marriage of true minds let us admit no impediment.”

Jharkhand represents one of the last great remaining edifices of tribal culture still related with the deep past on the one side, and with its natural environment on the other. It is therefore important not only to India but to the whole world as the model of an earlier age. What Europe was a thousand years ago Jharkhand is today. In the past thousand years man has not become more civilized despite the talk of civilization and modernization, but more cunning, barbarous and cruel, despoiled and unprincipled. History has left us no place for doubt, especially the history of Europe in the twentieth century. If India is to follow as a role model she must be warned... this is the land of the Vedas. The statesmanship of old has been pygmified, spirituality abused, deeper significances in the arts lost, human conscience vandalized. Social acceptance of immorality and corruption so long as they are backed by wealth is now new standard.

In the rock paintings of Likhanya in the Aravalli hills near Mirzapur is clear evidence in prehistoric rockart of the first millennium of the confrontation between the horse-riding Aryans on their fine horses and large African elephants, with riders and troops armed with swords, spears, shields, and bows. They are depicted in a battlefield represented by a cryptic square under which is a figure of a deer similar to that found in the Satpahars illustrated earlier(see p.22) and on the left side we find the tribal contingent with a puny Indian elephant, fleeing tigers, and naked soldiers... Clearly it is a scene of classic confrontation between the strong and the weak. It is indeed interesting to note the presence of African elephants, and this may be observed for the first time. The elephants of Africa used by the Aryans would have been the domesticable variety of the Okavango in Africa which elephants had been used by Hannibal’s army in Europe. This is the only African elephant that can be domesticated and trained for riding.

J. van Troy, S.J., a Jesuit historian of Ranchi, had observed, in regard to the prehistory of the Chotanagpur region: "From 1865 onward, such early stone tools have been discovered in Bokaro coalfield, in the Manbhum and Singhbhum districts and further east and south along the Kasi (Bankura district) and Burhabalanga (Mayurbhanj district) rivers; only a couple of them have been reported from Barwe (Kurumgarh)... Rough flake blade tools: axes, choppers, scrapers, chisels, cleavers are again mostly found in the outlying valleys and hills, but a few of them have been noted in Barwe and at Rajrappa (Hazaribagh district). 551 tools of 31 types, such as scrapers blades, handaxes, cleavers, choppers, etc. have been discovered as far north as Paisra (Kharagpur hills); and in at least fifteen places (i.e. Kuliana) along the Burhabalanga river in north Mayurbhanj (Orissa), hundreds of core and flake tools, made of fine grained quartzite have been collected to the south. Flake tools have also been found as far east as the Dwarakesvara, close to Bankura, also on the Subarnarekha (Chandil-Nimdih) and along the Sanjai river (Lotapahad, Sonua), west of Chakradhapur, and on the road Chakradhapur-Chaibasa. Worksites of flake tools have been located. Similar tools have been collected from the North Koel valley (Pratabpur, Dhakulia) in Palamau." (J. van Troy, *Prehistory and Early History of Chotanagpur*, Cultural Chotanagpur, Edited by S. Bosu Mullick, Ranchi).

There is no mention of an upper Damodar civilization or prehistory anywhere in the annals of research of Chotanagpur up to the beginning of the 1990s when I brought to light the presence of palaeolithic habitation sites in the North Karanpura valley and their continuous evolution into the Mesolithic and the appearance of the rock art sites which have now made this threatened region justly famous worldwide and formed a buffer against the coal mining. The area between the upper Damodar river in North Karanpura and the North Koel in Palamau had not been subjected to adequate palaeoarchaeological researches even by the British who were diligent observers and avid chroniclers. The Pleistocene deposits of the Sone and Narmada river valleys and their continuous evolution to a Harappan level of civilization and culture have not been studied by prehistorians or given the attention it deserves. The late Fr. Henry Heras in his work on Proto Indo-Mediterranean Civilization (H. Heras, S.J., *Studies in Proto Indo-Mediterranean Civilization*, Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay 1953) has referred to the Harappan level of culture, as well as prehistory, revealed by this region. It has unfortunately faced industrial and mining devastation in the Sone valley and the Narmada dam is now destroying the great heritage of that valley. Fortunately for the Hazaribagh and North Chotanagpur region its archaeological heritage has been highlighted over the past decade consistently with new finds throughout the region. Van Troy was not an archaeologist and overlooks the large water deposits during the Pleistocene ice-melts in interglacial periods, and claims that "the Chotanagpur plateau was but rarely visited by the early food-collectors and roving hunters-fishermen. They moved rather along rivers of the outlying hilly regions..." (*Ibid*) And he has qualified this by further observing, "As elsewhere on the Peninsular plateau, the early foodgatherers and hunters came only rarely on the plateau; they avoided heights above 700 metres, and thick forests, and moved along the middle reaches of the Subarnarekha, Kasi and other rivers of the out-hills." Now with all regards to Van Troy and his otherwise excellent scholarship, this seems a highly prejudiced view. Have we not found prehistoric remains of man across Jharkhand's hilly plateau and in its river valleys such as the Damodar, North Koel etc.? Does this not admirably prove human habitation since palaeolithic times? Just then what can Father van Troy be implying? There has been a long and not unglorious tradition of scholarship to deny indigenous groups rights of indigenous settlement. While I do not charge Fr. van Troy with such motive, he

undoubtedly seems to be following the bandwagon opinion of European scholarship and Hindu research which consistently attempted to deny indigenous evidence of occupation to tribals for colonialization priorities. The late stone age after 6,000BC grew out of the earlier stone age. This was the microlithic period when an industry of small chert and quartzite blades struck from tiny pebble corestones barely an inch in size gave tiny blades of stone 1.5 – 5 cm thick which were made into delicate points used for arrowheads, for surgery, or hafted in rows on wood or antler-horn handles to make sickles for harvesting the earliest crops. Such a major microlith industry site may be seen today on the side of the metal road from Tandwa to Mandair on the high bank overlooking the Garhi river and the little village of Laranga on the opposite bank. This site was drawn to my attention in 1993 by Erwin Neumayer, and dozens of white quartz microliths have been collected from this site. My daughter Juliet subsequently discovered a fine flat polished axehead from this site. Laranga is famous for the troops of elephants migrating from the Satpahars to the Mahadeva ranges through the village lands which are presently being threatened by massive opencast coal mines and a vast dam in south Tandwa for a super thermal power station which will endanger the Mauryan site at Sidpa, rockart of Sidpa and Raham, as well as submerging the last viable elephant and tiger corridors between the Satpahars and the Mahudi ranges.

Similar microlithic sites are found in many of the rockart sites of North Karanpura valley, including Isco, Thethangi, Sariya, Raham, Sidpa, Khandar, Gonda, Etc. These are not mentioned by historians such as Van Troy because note has perhaps only very recently been made of such sites in the region. Two microlith sites have been excavated close to Chotanagpur plateau: Birbhanpur near Durgapur in West Bengal, and Kuchaiburi near Baripada in Orissa's Mayurbhanj district. The presence of these microliths in a level immediately below polished stone tools (Neolithic) and some simple pottery made Van Troy believe this last phase of microlithic industry lasted upto 2,000 BC. What he does not tell us is whether any iron slag was present which would give evidence of iron-making at the time. In the Hazaribagh prehistoric sites such as Isco and Thethangi abundant remains of iron slag are found a few hundred yards from the caves of rockart wherein both Neolithic and microlithic industry remains are found. No iron slag is found within the caves or their immediate vicinity, showing these were the produce of different cultures. In fact iron slag is freely found in all the early settlement sites of the North Karanpura valley and on the Hazaribagh plateau, and much of the early deforestation of the Hazaribagh plateau and river valleys were perhaps due to the cutting down of forests in the Iron Age for fuel for smelting iron, paving the way for agriculture.

Small microliths hafted onto wooden or bone handles have been found along the Subarnarekha and Sanjai rivers as well as on some parts of the Ranchi plateau at the base of the rocky hills on the Ranchi-Kankey road and at the rocky outcrop at Khijritoli near Biru, Simdega. It may be pointed out here that microliths come in two varieties, (i) being the finely pointed blades of the so-called Vindhyan type found in the Isco area, and used for surgery, or arrowheads, and (ii) the small, flat, sharp quartz flake variety used for hafting on sickles found in Laranga, and other places. The development of the polished stone tool age began around this time. Wheels were first used for polishing stone tools before they were used to make pottery which had been corded upto this time. The polishing of stone tools was done after their chipping and shaping. These chips and flakes are to be found in the cave shelters where the stone tools are found today. The finished tool was polished by applying water mixed with an oily substance and ground on a stone wheel. From 1857 in the wake of

the turmoil of the tribal uprisings expressing tribal solidarity over their identity and rights Britishers began looking to these people's cultural heritage and from then onwards Neolithic stone tools have been found in coal mine areas such as Raniganj in the Dhanbad district, and in the valley of the Sanjai and Birhabalanga rivers. In Kuchibari in Mayurbhanj district polished stone tools were found with coarse brownish-red pottery just above a microlithic layer. The site was found by Dr.B.K.Thapar who dated it at 1000 BC. Ground adzes, axeheads, chisels, hammer-stones and grinding stones have been found in considerable quantities in the Ranchi district, among others by S.C.Roy. In Hazaribagh we have brought to light polished axeheads from Isco, Chapri, Laranga, Canary Hill, and Jharpo twenty kilometres east of Hazaribagh where one of three shouldered celts is in beautiful green chalcedony . A Vedda type axehead was found in Canary Hill which I have drawn particular attention to since it points to contact with the Vedda culture of South India. The others are of the shouldered celt variety referred to by Heine-Geldern. Some of these axeheads show signs of hafting on a handle, and use. In Canary Hill there is sign of continuous occupation evidenced. A Kushan period fort has been brought to light on the south of the hill along with a Buddhist statue of Sarasvati. There are also dolmens half a kilometre on the south of the hill. All the sites have also yielded coarse brownish-red pottery. The celts, apart from the Vedda-type one from Canary Hill are square-shouldered and similar to the rectangular square-shouldered rounded celts from the P.O.Bodding collection from Santal Parganas. To the west of the hill a water collection site has yielded yellow ochre pottery (OCP), pierced shell trade ornaments from the sea-coast possibly from Tamralipti, black and red pottery (BRW) and places the archaeological level around 400 BC.

## The Pre-historic Culture of Jharkhand

According to S.C. Roy and other experts the Mundas reached Jharkhand in 600 BC when they occupied the Chotanagpur plateau, in which they found a flourishing Chalcolithic culture in south Ranchi (Khunti) in which the Bhuinars (clearers of the land) were the Tirkis, an Oraon clan, and the Raiyats were the Asurs. (S.C. Roy, *The Munda*, 1912) The Mundas had been hard driven along with all the Kol tribes from north India along the entire valley of the Ganges by the hard-driving Aryans who were taking advantage of their victory in the Mahabharata, or great war against the aboriginals of northern India. Among the tribes they opposed were the Kurus who I have reason to believe were the Kurrukh or Brahui (North Dravidian) speaking Oraon tribe. The Oraons have a long settled history in north and northwest India, establishing the oldest Neolithic settlements in the Indus of Mehargarh and Balkot around 7000-4000 BC with the upper levels displaying pottery marks identical with the prehistoric rock-art of the Damodar Valley in Bal-Kot Level I, Period I- 3500-2600 BC ) which is the earliest known level of the so called Harappan culture when writing first started ! In my opinion this was the work of the Oraons, who according to the expert Asko Parpola, on the basis of his studies on the decipherment of the Indus Script where the people of Harappa whose North Dravidian language - Kurrukh- was the language spoken in Harappa (Asko Parpola, *Deciphering the Indus Script*, Cambridge University Press, 1994).

I will refer the serious reader to the chapters of my book *Pre-Vedic Sources of Hindu Civilization, Megaliths and Tribes*, (2001), but I will give a brief exposition here. The Kol and Munda tribes occupying the north of India and the Ganges valley took to the hills or fell back eastward under Aryan pressure. At this time the Ganges Valley was densely forested, and we hear in the Ramayana of the Asuras (tribes) molesting the peace of the forest ashramas of Brahmana sages. This was in a period when both iron and stone-chipped tools were still being used. Remnants of menhirs, dolmens, and manifestations of a proto-austic megalithic Munda and Kol culture even till today are found throughout the Ganges valley with settlement remains and burial mounds. There are two megalithic traditions in India which have to be borne in mind (a) one being a very ancient proto-austic one manifesting sepulchral menhirs and dolmens, which is at least five thousand or more years old, coming with the Munda tribes from the Northeast and even perhaps through Southeast Asia as far as Easter Island. (b) The other being the porthole cist type of burial stones connected with an Aryan horse-riding people from the northern Steppes of the Caucasus, which swept over northwest, west, and South India between 800-400 BC, and which I claim (perhaps for the first time) reached the Hazaribagh region where porthole burial cists have been found in numbers. Such an incursion into eastern India will account for the ritual worship of the horse and rider in the brass, iron, pottery, and painted figures of the Hazaribagh Sohrai; Bastar bronzes; Khond (Orissa) iron work; Bankura (Bengal) terracotta horses and riders. The porthole cist megaliths are found with iron remains and Black-and-Red-ware (BRW ) pottery.

Throughout the Hazaribagh plateau we witness remains of these two megalithic cultures (a) one around 5000 BC of sepulchral menhirs (standing) stones, sepulchral dolmen (laying flat) stones, and (b) The recent Scythian one of around 400 BC consisting of porthole-cist burial stones. These are found in areas with evidence of settlement surrounded by stone circles with burials. Stone cists have been found by me in Hazaribagh town and Satpahar in the North Karanpura Valley. It is significant that the proto-austic menhirs and dolmen raising sepulchral tradition has left vast remains of a vanished people, obviously Mundaric, who



have swept southward on to the Ranchi plateau, where they still continue a megalith raising tradition in Southern Ranchi. This tradition of erecting ancestor stones have also been followed by some Oraons. The stones are cut by the local ironsmiths called *Lohra* or *Lohar*.

When the Oraons had been in Mehergarh it is believed their home land was in fact the Narmada valley (Elfenbein) , which infact is one of the oldest site of evolution in the world called by Jesuit paleontologist Teilhard deChardin the “Classic Pleistocene”. The Oraons could also have occupied sites in the Ganges valley. However, according to Parpola, at a period significantly close to the eastward thrust of the horse-riding Scythian porthole cist-people we find the Oraons at Rohtas-on-Sone. From here they divide into two groups the Malto-speaking Mal-Pahariyas who inhabit the Rajmahal Hills south of Bhagalpur, who went down along the Ganges, and the other being the Kurrukh-speaking Oraons who came up the North Koel river into Chotanagpur. Both Malto and Kurrukh are Brahui languages belonging to the North Dravidian branch of the Brahui language which has little connection with South Dravidian, according to Parpola. When the Oraons arrived Chotanagpur it was certainly not by accident. They already must have maintained contacts with the Oraons already resident here. The present population of Tirkis speak Kurrukh expertly. At about this time the Ganges valley in the Bihar (Magadh) region was experiencing various convulsions. But before we look at this let me remind the reader that there is every reason to believe that a trade in exporting copper and tin from Chotanagpur, by the Oraons, to the Indus valley was far simpler than importing copper from Oman. Some copper and tin could have gone from Khetri in Rajasthan Arravallis. Copper and tin were indispensable to the making of bronze. If we look at the map of the main Dravidian stream moving east in 800 BC under Scythian invasion we find it crosses Udaipur and then to the Narmada river to the south, while to the east it travels up the Ganges river. At Udaipur has been found recently the remains of the Ahar Civilization, a culture similar to Harappa both in form and time at Ahar, Balathal and Ojiyana in the eastern Arravallis to the west of Udaipur. The date is between 3500-1800 BC. As many as ninety sites of this civilization have been so far found in Udaipur, Chittorgarh, Dungarpur, Bhilwara, Rajasmand, Bundi, Tonk, Ajmer, over an area of 10,000 sq km. ! The important discovery at Ahar has been the discovery of the use of Khovar painting. The technique of decoration of pottery called “reversed slip” is common in Balathal (although a few examples were found in Harappa, Mohenjodaro, and Surkotada dated at 2400 BC in the Prime age of the Harappan civilization. The technique consists in putting a second coat of wet earth color (wet slip) over the lower dried coat of earth color (dry slip) and then cutting the design in it revealing the bottom earth colour in the varied forms. This process, called *sgraffito*, was used two millennia later by the ancient Greeks in their Red-on-Black and Black-on- Red pottery. These Ahar people were using copper from the Khetri mines in the Arravallis. It is evidenced that the Ahar Civilization was abandoned in 1800 BC around the same time at Harappa. If the Kurrukh language speakers were driven east by the Scythians with the Kurrukh language around 800 BC, it is eminently possible that the Kurrukhs were the Kurus of the Mahabharata, with their capital at Kurukshetra. Between the fall of the Ahar and Harappan civilization around the beginning of the second millennium, the resistance of the tribes of northwestern India was obviously weakening. These Kurrukhs would have then been among the settled population of northern India, and their centre would most likely have been at Kurrukshetra. Thus *Haldighat* in Rajasthan could easily be seen as the *Haldiban* or *Sasang-Beda* of the Oraons and Mundas.

While I am of the view that both Dravidians and proto-Australoid tribes occupied India since earliest times we have accepted the subsequent cross-cultural effects of Aryan and Sathyian invasions on the peoples of the Indian subcontinent who were indigenous, and even upto now retain strong traces of their indigenous ancestors even where unduly impacted on by non-indigenous influences both Hindu and non-Hindu. Kol, Bhil, Munda, Oraon, and Baiga/Gond have marched in successive trails across this land from times when migration was a means of hunter-gatherer survival systems.

I want to specifically observe with regards to the mesochalcolithic rockart of the Upper Damodar valley, (North Karanpura), which has been dated by several experts such as Erwin Neumayer (Vienna, 1993), to the Mesochalcolithic (5000-3000 BC), that it predates the and was the prototype of the Mehargarh-Bal-Kot Level I-XII, Period I. 3500-2600 BC which are the oldest pottery marks of the Harappan civilization. Further, it is of important that these marks are similar to the rockart of Isco and other places in the Upper Damodar valley. Further, it is importance to note that these markings are still found in Khovar painting and Sohrai painting as well as the designs and the marks and objects of metal-casters (Malhars) in the Hazaribagh region in making their various metal objects such as *paila*, statue etc.

*Early Harappan Pottery marks: Bal-Kot, Level I-XII, Period I, 3500-2600 BC.*

It is significant that the Oraons, Santals, and Mundas have not adopted horse figures neither in their art nor in their rituals. This is quite natural since all three tribes have been hounded by horsemen, whether the horse cart pulling Vratyas and Aryans who brought the first horses, or the horse-riding Scythians. Oraon house art of 1915 illustrated in S. C. Roys's book on the Oraons shows elephants and riders but no horses. It shows the six petal lotus and "wheel", much later found in the west (Byzantine Renaissance: "Wheel of the Elephant"). The Turkoman horse of Aryan origin appears with rider in a period rockart painting of 500 BC at Likhanya in the Kaimur Range of Mirzapur district. It is not found so far in the rock painted shelters of Hazaribagh.

## Evolution of Society from the Earliest times in Hazaribagh

The opinion of prehistorians is that primitive hunter-gatherer societies lived in leaf dwellings exactly like those used until the present times by the Birhors of Jharkhand and the Hadzabe of Tanzania. Such dwellings they say could go back to the end of the last glaciation twelve thousand years ago which ushered in the middle stone age (i.e. between the palaeolithic and the microlithic/Neolithic). After this time stones would shift from their association with weapons to symbols of worship. We know that stone figures of the mother goddess have survived from over twenty thousand years ago. One such statue, in sandstone, was found from Godda by Kusum Lakra some six years back, and dated to 20,000 BC by Dr.B.K.Thapar. It is similar to the pregnant, steatopygous figurine of a mother goddess discovered in Willendorf, Germany, which is world-famous.

The birth of agriculture has been placed around fifteen thousand years ago in Southeast Asia by American archaeologists and predates the rice-growing cultures over the cereal-growing agricultural phenomenon in the Tigris-Euphrates delta in the fifth millennium BC favoured by British and other European archaeologists. India is unique in that around about the middle of North India, i.e. Varanasi – Allahabad, we find the cereal growing culture of the Northwest meeting the rice growing culture of the Northeast. I had pointed out this phenomenon sometime back to the scientific community, since it is not just a social, but an ecological niche divide, wherein several species find their branches starting from the species of the drongo. The Black Drongo or King Crow (*Dicrurus adsimilis*) finds its eastern, the Whitebellied Drongo (*Dicrurus caerulescens*) its western, and Racket-Tailed Drongo (*Dicrurus paradiseus*) its northern, limits in this region roughly along the longitude of northeast Jharkhand on the 24<sup>th</sup> Latitude. Equally, the flora of northern Jharkhand at Parasvanath in the same Latitude manifests an ecological niche found only in the Western Ghats. These findings are placed here for the interest of scholars. However, to return to what I was saying earlier, the incidence of rice-growing must be seen as peculiar to the Bihar region of the Ganges valley even as a leguminous-cereal cropping becomes distinctly identifiable with the agricultural ecology of Uttar Pradesh and northern India to the west. South of Allahabad in the area of the Mahagara Dam Dama is the Koldihawa megalithic site where domesticated rice has been recorded by C-14 dating at 5,440 BC, which is the earliest evidence of domestication of rice in India. Incidentally, this also was the political divide between Magadha and Aryavarta and may be traced down to Cape Comorin as a continental divide. When I pointed this out to the late Pupul Jayakar and B.K.Thapar half a decade ago they were astonished, and Pupul-ji thought I had hit upon something important. However, in these days of political scandelmongering and corporate corruptibility we are far removed from the realm of such high thoughts. To return to the birth of agriculture, which in India is the birth of rice cropping. The wild rice had been grown since 12,000 BC in Southeast Asia and very likely came with the earliest protoaustraloid migrations via the Northeast into the Brahmaputra valley. This culture was to develop into the megalithic culture whose earliest manifestations are placed around 6,000 BC in Assam. Some scholars are of the opinion that maize went from India to South America, about which I will write in greater detail later. (K.P.Chattopadhyaya, *The Ancient India Culture Contacts and Migrations*, Firma K.L.Mukhopadhyaya, Calcutta, 1970, p.71) It is speculative of an early contact with Easter Island from India borne out by the similarities between the Indus script and that of Isco with the Easter Island stele now in the Ethnographic Museum, Paris. On the western side Fr.Heras was of the opinion that Dravidian societies migrating from India carried solar

worship from Mohenjodaro to ancient Egypt manifest in the worship of Ra. He was equally convinced that the Indus valley civilization was the outcome of South India's Dravidian culture. As I have mentioned before Heras had laid out a vast map for the early migration of megaliths from India across West Asia, North Africa, Spain, France, the British Isles, Germany, Etc. (*Ibid*, p.245). Heras believed the Harappan civilization was created by Dravidians. The discovery of a Vedda-type polished stone axe from Canary Hill, Hazaribagh, is significant to our story, because it proposes the existence of a Vedda-like people in Jharkhand. This small, dark-skinned aboriginal of the South is vital to our understanding of the migration pattern of megaliths southward. Obviously there was a southward migration during the megalithic age also. This would have occurred around 5,000-3,000 BC, and would have led to the first appearance of a megalithic culture in South India. It was the same culture which Father Heras believed went across North Africa to Europe. Further, any contact, whether between the southern arm of the Dravidian culture, or the northern of the Dravidian – Protoaustraloid impact with the incoming Aryan culture would have resulted in a set of circumstances, perhaps not far removed from circumstances upto contemporary times, of the clash between the non Aryan and Aryan types. An understanding of this may be offered by perhaps the greatest philosophic mind modern India has produced, Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan. He writes, “ (Vedic religion) absorbed, embodied, and preserved the types and rituals of other cults... It took so much from the social life of the Dravidian and other native inhabitants of India that it is very difficult to disentangle the original Aryan elements from the others.” ( S.Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religious and Western Thought*, p.308) So even the foremost philosopher of Dravidian India kowtowed to the Aryan. In his view of India at the close of the megalithic age R.D.Banerji the great archaeologist, has observed, “When the Indo-Aryans had conquered and colonized the basin of the Indus and its tributaries, and that of the Ganges as far as Banaras, the Asuras surrounded them on all sides. They (the Asuras) were certainly in possession of Magadha or South Bihar and modern Rajputana at the time of (the) tribal war between the Pandavas and Kurus. These Asuras were great builders, and their building operations were regarded with awe and reverence by the Aryans. In Vedic literature mention is made of the castles of the Dasas built of stone.” (R.D.Banerji, *Prehistoric, Ancient and Hindu India*, 1934, p.20). It might be pertinent to point out, in the archaeological and historical map between the tribal world and the Aryan world that Banerji has pointed out, the tribal possessions south of the Ganges in Magadha were part of the tribal heritage, which is also borne out by the Bodhgaya, Rajgir and Nalanda heritage as well as that of Nalanda, Rajauli, Jamui, Satgawan and Banka, being very much a part of the tribal belt, much of which has remained outside the demarcation of Jharkhand. This territory may be seen as being officially acquired by the non tribal. It is a historical statement of fact.

Thus in Magadha great Asura fortresses like Rajgir remain in memory of tribal chieftains like Jarasandha. A series of forts or their remains still cover Hazaribagh plateau, some almost untraceable in deep jungles. Such forts will be found throughout the jungles of Jharkhand and its peripheries along the foothills leading to the Ganges valley from Gaya to Bhagalpur. All of these sites will be found to stand close to prehistoric sites of great antiquity such as was found not long back in prehistoric rockart in the districts of Nawada, Jamui, Giridih and Kodarma. It has been claimed by the discoverer of the several rockart sites of the region, Col.Dr.A.K.Prasad, that the rockart also displays Kharoshti and Brahmi script. We must realize the significance of the Patliputra civilization also as the capital of the Mauryas who were a Dravidian tribe like the Sakya tribe to which the Buddha belonged a

little further to the north and west. The significance of the Buddha coming from Lumbini and Nagara northeast of Banaras is significant in understanding that arm of protection which the Sakya prince afforded the tribes in the vulnerable northern areas of the Ganges valley open to brahminical infiltration into the tribal kingdoms between Nepal and Bimbisara's Rajgriha. In earlier times it may be supposed the north and south bank of the Ganges was entirely a tribal belt inhabited by Kols, Cheros, Kharwars, Mundas and other tribes. Slowly the region was felled for timber and fields were cleared, the tribals fell back into the hilly regions of Jharkhand, and the Hindu advancement took place. This is seen in the division of modern Bihar and Jharkhand in which Jharkhand has lost Magadh and Nalanda to Bihar. It is here that the confrontation between brahminism and Buddhism was hardest.

All the forts on the Hazaribagh plateau conform roughly to a grid based on latitude and longitude, which also conforms to divisions on the same basis laid out in the conglomeration of megalithic sites throughout the region. Indra the Aryan chief, also deified by the Aryans, was spoken of in the Rig Veda as the Hurler of Thunderbolts, and the Destroyer of Forts, Destroyer of Cities. This tradition was carried on with the Ramayana in the Hindu tradition when Viscwamitra chose Rama and Lakshmana's assistance to destroy the tribal Rakshasas of Dandak. Of this period Valmiki has written, "And Having destroyed all those Rakshasas disturbing sacrifices, Raghu's descendant was honoured by the saints, and even as Indra in days of yore, after having vanquished the Asuras." (*The Ramayana*, Balakandam, Ed. M.N.Dutt, Calcutta, 1891, Sec.30, p.79). Later, after Rama's banishment to Dandakaranya, he carried his bow at the ready in case of attack by the Rakshasas, until admonished by his wife the gentle Sita. This may be read in the *Ramayana*.

We hear of the Mundas taking an important part in the Kuru-Pandava war at Kurukshetra in which, as in the Trojan war, "whole tribes and nations ranged on either side" in Homer's words. Sanjaya refers to the Mundas in the left wing commanded by Vridhadvala, and we hear the great Aryan warrior Satyaki calling the Mundas *Danava*, which means demons, when he says haughtily, "I shall kill these Mundas even as Indra killed the *Danavas*." (*Mahabharata*, Bhisma-Badha, Para.117,23)

Stepping back from post to post the tribes of India in the North were relentlessly pursued and assiduously converted, removed by coercion or force from their ancestral lands won for them by their fathers, as they fell back step by step in the face of the open attachment of their territories by the Aryan Hindus. In his monograph on the Mundas (The Traditional History of the Mundas, Chapter Two, p.21-67, *The Mundas and Their Country*, 1912, Reprint Edn. Man In India, Ranchi, 1995), the Father of Indian Anthropology, the late Sarat Chandra Roy has deftly described the destruction of the footholds in the Ganges valley of the Kol and Munda tribes in the face of an Aryan onslaught in prehistoric times around 600 BC. This would have been in the aftermath of the Kuru-Pandava war, the Mahabharata, in which the Hindus proved victorious. Roy has shown how the Kols and Mundas were driven back from their ancestral villages from Agra and Kurukshetra to the eastern ramparts of the Chotanagpur plateau, littering the valley of the Ganges, until that time densely forested for want of adequate iron implements to cut it down, with their hundreds of ancient forts and megalithic sites and villages which still remain fresh upon the page of modern memory in their place-names, those signposts of antiquity which give us the ancient settlement geography of vanished times. These settlements Roy shows, collapsed one by one before the superior Hindu forces. The Asura was called the Dasa Kuyava, a demon who carried off the

wealth of the so-called poor Hindu rishis and sages (*Kutsa Angirasa, Rig Veda, Book I, Hymn 104*) and he was hated by these Hindu rishis who thus justified his extermination as we see from the celebrated passage in the Ramayana of Valmiki where the sage Viswamitra came to Dasratha, Rama's father, and asked for his sons' services to kill off the Rakshasas. In Indra's time these Rakshasas were referred to as Asuras. Over the course of millennia the scenario has not changed. In India ancestrally the fight has always been between the brahminical Hindu and the tribal, *the despised tribal*. This historical social imperative has not been altered by seven hundred years of Muslim rule or three centuries of British rule, nor by fifty years of self-rule as an independent democratic Republic. The reason is clear. Hindu fundamentalism can afford to brook no change if it wishes to keep its authority and power intact for those within its three-tiered caste system, and that fourth caste of Hinduism, the Scheduled Castes, into which, one by one, tribals are admitted, as to a privileged status which though not exactly caste Hindu, is nevertheless a Hindu status in the Indian mind, and one which modern India has tried to show as Hinduism to the world. **(Appendix-III)**

The Rig Veda has faithfully documented how the destruction of the forests alone may ensure the total destruction of the tribals, and this great weapon in the hands of Hindu fundamentalists has been used with vengeance. In the Rig Veda we read of the Brighus who used fire to destroy the forests and thus conquer the tribals. *Rig Veda.1.60,1; 1,56,6;1,143,4,58,6*), and it is written,

*“Agni struck down the noseless (anasan) Dasyus with his weapon and overthrown the imperfect peakers (mridhrabacha) in their homes.”*

*(Rig Veda VI, 29,10;1,5,9,6 & V.2.1)*



*Karna and Arjun*

Arjun, who led the Pandavas in the Bharata War is extolled in the Mahabharata, while his elder brother Karna who led the Kurus is humbled. The Pandavas were Kurus, the sons of Pandu. The mother of both Arjuna and Karna was Pritha. Karna's father was the sun, which Pritha hid. The Bharata war between the Kuru brothers was engineered by Krishna out of a family dispute, and in it brother killed brother, causing the destruction of vast numbers and the collapse of tribal solidarity in North India. This paved the way for the advent of the Hindu state of Aryavarta as the tribes fell back to the eastern portion of the Ganges valley. *“This is helmet-wearing Arjun, sprung of Kuru's mighty race, Pandu's son and borne by Pritha, prince of worth and warlike grace, .... Karna silent heard this mandate, rank nor lineage could he claim, Like a raindrop-pelted lotus bent his humble head in shame!”* (Romesh Ch.Dutt ✍️ *Maha-Bharata, Epic of the Bharatas, Book I, VII*)

Thus the noble Gandhari, Dhrit-rashtra's royal wife, admonishes Krishna holding her dead son Duryodhan's lifeless body on the battlefield of forlorn Kuru-defeated Kurukshetra,



“ Ay! My son the best of heroes, he hath won the warrior’s sky,  
Kshatras nobly conquer, Krishna, when in war they nobly die !”  
(Ibid, Bk.XI,III)

The Mahabharata recounts in its main passage of the Bharatas and the Kurus, Pancalas, Salvas, Matsyas and Yadavas, of the western Gangetic valley, those large tracts of forests such as Khandava-vana, Dvaita-vana, Kamyaka-vana shaded streams like the Sarasvati, Drasadvati, and Malini along the banks of which rishis had their hermitages and ashramas. The war against the Kurus was an anti tribal war led by the Bharatas or Aryan Pandus and the victory of the Bharatas was crucial to Aryan control over India. We are not to lose sight of the fact the Aryan numbers were very small, so small in fact as to be insignificant when compared with the large mass of India. Tribal rule was called by these people imperialistic and the tribal fort of Girivraja on the Sone river was targeted. In modern India the culture and archaeological heritage of the Sone has been destroyed, as is now being done to the Narmada. The statesmen of Aryavarta devised a new strategy to conquer and control. A hereditary kingship was established of the Kshatriya line with evidence from the Mahabharata of the structure of his council. The common people are said to have been a kingless people of lower order governed only by panchayats or village councils. The king’s council was comprised according to the *Santiparvan* of four Brahmin ministers, eight Kshatriya ministers, twentyone Vaishya ministers, and three Shudra ministers for representing the people. A vast army was devised to control the country, consisting of chariots, elephants, horses and infantry, and all the machines and engines of war devised upto that time, described in detail in *Santiparvan* Meanwhile, the tribal weaponry consisted of bows and arrows, staves and spears. The use of the horse was not known to the tribals nor was it part of their culture.

This then is the classic, timeless picture of India with all its *laissez-faire* and fundamentalism, its sloth and glory – an unchanging continent where a timeless assault has been waged by newcomers on its snubnosed *dasas* or tribal population, the weak, dark aboriginal, by the tall, powerful, fair invaders. We have to appreciate this archetype in understanding the modern historical development of India in general and Jharkhand in particular. The forts which I have referred to were to become enwound in the myth and legend of ancient migratory tribes like the Munda, Oraon, Santal, and legendary occupation sites such as Ruidas or Rohtas, Chai, Champa, Kunda, Piparia, Satgawan in Jharkhand, in the western Ganges river valley Azimgarh, Kalangsagarh, Chedi, Chitragarh or Chitrakoot, in Magadha, Rajgir, Cheon and Gaya; Nagarwargarh, the aboriginal forts of the Cheros in Shahabad and Balia. Chai and Champa in Bhagalpur. In Hazaribagh the forts of Sisai, Urda, Mandair, Thethangi, Sidpa, Badam, Jorakath, Kunda, Pratabpur, Ramgarh, Indra, Jharpo, and more recently Ichak and Padma. I will give a brief description of one of these forts, the Kunda one. Built formerly of stones and large sundried bricks jointed with gravel, lime and brick dust or *surki* it is typical of these old forts of the region. The Kunda fort was established by the ancestors of the present Raj family. The family tradition records that the son of the Emperor Aurangzeb, Alamgir, laid siege to the fort when he had attacked Jharkhand. The fort was under siege for six months, after which the Raja was taken captive to Delhi, and during his absence the state was ruled by his younger brother. A marble plaque giving these details was placed on the gate to the fort. The fort has an underground well and two springs, and underground tunnels leading to a rock-hewn temple of Shiva for

secret retreat. I have seen similar fortifications in the old Maksudpur fort in Magadh. In the Satpahars, on the slope leading up from the spring source of the Satbohia river some three miles due west of Mandair village, I came upon an abandoned stone fort high on the edge of the range which would probably trace its ancestry to earliest Kol fortifications in Hazaribagh. The presence of iron slag and large ringstones in the region further attest to its prehistoric antiquity. The continuance of these forts from immemorial times despite the coming and going of several outside elements is linked with the establishment of tribal suzerainty over the region. The tribals were always treated with contempt by the Aryans and S.C.Roy gives a vivid account of it as I have noted.

The Asuras or Asurs are Kol cousins of the Mundas, a protoaustraloid people. Mundas may be traced to the Kinnaurese linguistically. The Kinnaurese, or Kinners, are a Mundaric tribe, speaking a Mundaric dialect, who live on the steep slopes along the valley of the Sutlej in Uttaranchal Himalaya, . These people practice demon worship or *bhutaha-puja* and *dharania-puja* or place-worship. In the *Mahabharata*, *Shiva Purana*, *Vishnu Purana*, this tribe is referred to as the Gandharvas or celestial dancers and musicians, the masters of song and dance who drape themselves with garlands of flowers and play musical instruments. They present a picture similar to the Bauls of Bengal whom I have earlier referred to. The womenfolk wear heavy silver and gold jewellery, and present the perfect picture of the heavily ornamented female figurines from the Harappan culture still left to museums. This Kinner tribe will seem to be the remnants of the Mundaric tribes in the Himalayas. The migrations of the Asurs are recorded in their oral traditions as passing Dhaulagiri and Mainagiri peaks towering above the Kosi valley in Nepal. The ancient name of Annapurna, which is Mainagiri, is preserved in the Asur folklore. The Asurs also recall the lakes near mount Kailash, the Rakshastal and Mansarovar, in their oral traditions (W.H.P.Driver's Account). The Munda migrations may likewise be traced to the Mon-khmer languages of the Northeast, and the Turanian, and both are connected with the great megalithic tradition appearing from the Northeast. The Mundaric migrations are linked via the Brahmaputra (Tsang-po) valley with the Tibetan plateau, and via the Chin Hills with Yunan, the tribal districts of southwestern China, and also with Burma and Southeast Asia. All these would be seen as comparatively recent migrations in comparison with the great prehistoric antiquity of the presence of man in Hazaribagh or Jharkhand region generally. The river Damodar and to an extent the Suvarnaksha, take their place along the Yangtze , Nile, and the other great river valleys witnessing the emergence of Early Man. As we had seen at this time thousands of years back the Savaras and other primitive tribes covered the forested valley of the Ganges. Lord Krishna in Mathura is depicted as being dark -skinned. Savaras are a primitive Kol tribe and Kol place-names abound throughout the Ganges and Jumna dhoab upto Agra. Sarat Chandra Roy had pointed out that that the name "Asura" itself was a generic name for the Kol tribes (*The Munda*, p.35)

Whichever region the Mundas have occupied, whether in Assam and Meghalaya, Rajauli or Mithila, Bundelkhand or Bastar, even Jharkhand, they have left behind them their megaliths and stone circles. It would seem from a brief survey of brahminical-aboriginal conflict that the earliest enmity between the Aryans and the aboriginals was the conflict with the Kol tribes whether Asura or Munda, and finally with the Dravidian Oraons whom they had encountered first in Sindh. These Oraons have had a rough fate. The Malto-speakers who went north to the Rajmahal hills , and the Pahariyas as they are called the kinsmen of the Oraons and Santals, have been heavily impacted on by the Canadian-Coal

India opencast coal- mining at Lalmatiya in Rajmahal, and their future is precarious in the extreme in the Godda area. In ancient Buddhist times the political boundary with Bhagalpur or Champa extended to Monghyr and Rajmahal, and from Parasvanath to Murshidabad. This was also a vast relict area for Jaina places of worship. Scattered along the line between Bihar and Jharkhand today are mounds and stone cairns and megaliths which extend from Japla at the confluence of the North Koel and Sone to Balanya, Sirris, Kutumba and Sherghati. According to S.C.Roy some of the Kol tribes like the Korwa, Asur, Birji, and Kisan had gone up the North Koel river into Ranchi and Palamau where they are still today found. The Mundas and Santals retreating before the Hindus sometime around 600 BC crossed the Sone and entered the wide vale of Damodar from Japla between the Hazaribag plateau to the north and the Ranchi plateau to the south. The Mundas it is said by tradition first established a settlement at Omedanda, and the Oraons later at Basgi, both on the scarps of the Ranchi plateau, while the Santals divided from the main group and went northward into the jungled fastnesses of Hazaribag plateau and set up their settlements at Ormanjhi and Tatijharia in what came to be known to the British as the Shikarbhum district, a virtual hunter's paradise. Other Santals continued down the Damodar river into Manbhum and on to the Santal Parganas in Dumka area. It is clear that these areas were occupied by tribes before this time, and these would have been cousins of the Munda, Santal, Asur, Oraon and Birhor. The Bhuyas are closely related with the Birhor and intermarriage between the tribes is permitted, a little-known fact. The Bhuyas are great spirit-men, and offer all sorts of pujas to the small stones worshipped near the megalithic sites. They are akin to the Baiga medicine-men as Elwin points out. Other tribes of the region would have been Kharia, Savara, Paharia, Ho, Bhumij, Ghasi, Karwal, Bathudi, Parahiya, Mahli, Turi, Teli, Malar, Lohra, Baiga, Malharia, Turi, Ganju or Bhogta, Chik-Baraik, Binjia, Chero, Gorait, Kisan, Kurmi, Gond, Singwali, Gulgulia, Birjia, etc. The Birhor shrines known as *bonga-sthan* is placed at the east side of the settlement known as a *tanda* and consists of small wooden posts placed upright in a cleared space representing the ancestors. Birhor men do not believe in re-birth and believe that the soul or spirit of the dead goes to the ancestors in the *Bongasthan*. Birhor women, on the other hand, believe that a child born shortly after the death of someone in the *tanda* takes the spirit of the deceased.

According to the oral tradition of the Birhors their ancestors are attributed with the honour of having painted the prehistoric kohvaras of Hazaribagh. Today these people do not continue the tradition and are known to only draw some stick figures, animals and birds, and modern objects like cars, trucks and buses on the walls of government housing with charcoal. These drawings exhibit a palaeolithic style, and x-ray drawing. However, I have found intriguing glypts carved into the walls of these buildings which have a powerful spiritual quality. Birhor children make sand paintings in the dust of the earth around their settlements or tandas. The Birhors have an intriguing tradition that the Ramgarh Raja was of their tribe, and this is reported in ethnological studies. As the story has it an old Birhor couple had two sons, Dalel Singh and Makund Singh. One day the old couple found a *chihor* bush whose fruit contained silver coins which they cut and brought home. After their sons became wealthy they intrigued with the Raja of Singbhum and after they had conquered Chaingarha, Karanpura, Gola, and eighteen other places these estates were given to them by the Sing raja and that is how the present Rajas of Ramgarh are believed to have descended. (*The Munda*, pp.230-232). The Ramgarh Raj is thereafter believed to have proceeded as follows: 1250- 1368 Sisai; 1368-1670 Badam; 1670-1780 Ramgarh; 1780-

1885 Ichak; 1885 -2000Padma. Sisai is between Tandwa and Simariya. Badam is fifteen kilometers east of Barkagaon.

The stone tool culture had meanwhile passed away long before, but a word may be said here about how it happened. This period coincided with the the first rice cultivation on the steep hillsides, and done mainly with the hoe, for which the adivasis are referred to sometimes as a *hoe culture people*. All the major cultivation work to this day throughout Jharkhand is done with the use of the hoe or *Kudali*. Small cattle have been traditionally used to plough the fields and the ropes used for the cattle are traditionally made by the Birhors from the fibres of the wild chope creeper *Bauhinia scandens*. The use of stone in the daily life of the people continued with such objects as the *siloth* and grindstone used to ground turmeric. The stone workers of today still understand how the ancient stone tools had been made although stonework is now done by the Loharas or ironsmiths. This region had seen a great convulsion in the evolution of man in India when the earliest outside pressures were felt around the period of the Mahabharata war reflected in its traditions of song. In the small village communities on the hill slopes of Baluchistan overlooking the Sindh valley and in the river valley of the five rivers around five thousand years ago a great bronze age civilization also had been silently emerging. As earlier referred to, this was developed in Mehargarh in Baluchistan during the Neolithic by the ancestors of the Oraons. The tin used for smelting bronze, to be mixed with the copper before bronze could be made, was ferried from Chotanagpur by the Oraons, by way of the Narmada valley and Amber in Rajasthan, where their goddess Amba was venerated. Without the tin of Chotanagpur the bronze age of the Indus was impossible. The copper mines of Khetri in Rajasthan and the tin of Chotanagpur created the Harappan Bronze Age. The Oraons were as we have seen the Brahui speakers of the Baluchi Hills lying to the southwest of the Sindh valley. These people, who are the Kurukh speakers of Chotanagpur and the Malto speakers of the Rajmahal hills today are the descendants of those people, and the Kurukh language of the Oraons derives from the proper noun Kuru of the Kuru tribe, and Kurukshetra, the battlefield of the Mahabharata as I have mentioned. As we have seen through Parpola's recent scholarly work their language was the language spoken in Harappa. However, we have evidence of three major developments which seem to predate the Bronze Age and script developments in the Indus. The first is, (1) The rockart of Hazaribagh has ninetyfive characters of the Indus script in a proto-Harappan form and also a tradition found to continue even till today in the village art of the North Karanpura valley. (2) That Khovar and Sohrai painting done with curvilinear pictogrammatic forms is found to be the prototype of Northern Brahmi script, and modern Devnagri (3) That a classic bronze age civilization was excavated between 1915 and 1920 by Sarat Chandra Roy and Edward Gait in the Ranchi Plateau and its environs whose significance has upto now been suppressed. The collection of S.C.Roy, as earlier noted, is partly in the Indian Museum at Calcutta, and partly in the Man In India Office in Ranchi. Roy's excavations covered the present districts of Lohardaga, Ranchi, Khunti, Chakradhapur, Chaibasa and Gumla. The significance of these excavations has not been realized in the context of the true prehistoric significance of Jharkhand which makes it a parallel civilization to Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro with an exceptional advantage : Chotanagpur has the prehistoric ancestry that Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro lack. It is the challenge to the Indus civilization from within Jharkhand which alone possesses irrefutable evidence of an indigenous palaeolithic heritage which the Indus does not. Also, its infusion of megalithic civilization, which Harappa lacks, could

have alone suffused its knowledge of the sacred which was the driving impetus by which the geometry of the Harappan cities could be defined (*i.e. Vaastu-shastra*).

The copper ore workings in Jharkhand are of interest in establishing the early copper age in this region which has been substantiated at an archaeological level. A sizeable cache was discovered in Bargunda and came into the possession of Bruce Foote in 1887. Bargunda is in the Palganj estate 24 miles southwest of Giridih. The second major hoard was found in Purlia at a place named Pinda, 30 miles south and at Kalyanpur 32 miles west of Purlia town. Large-size copper celts in the form of human shaped flat hand axes were found in this cache also similar to those found in the Gunga Doab now in the National Museum and taken for the monogram of INTACH. The most important copper mines in Jharkhand are in the Singhbhum-Dhalbhum region where copper mines are in existence for the past century-and-half. At Kaharbare near to Pachamba there is also a copper deposit quite close to Bargunda where palaeolithic deposits were also found, as well as *a polished ring-stone in nearby Bargunda* which is important in establishment of continuity of ethnic society at a given cultural site. Paresnath Hill has also yielded upper palaeolithic implements. From these few instances may be decided a continuity of the copper age from the preceding stone age. In all these regions evidence of a megalithic civilization exists from Paresnath in the North to Gola in the south; Evidence of this abandoned earlier megalithic civilization may still be found abandoned in the jungles and fields of northern Jharkhand and throughout the Damodar Valley and Hazaribagh plateau. This megalithic culture *seems to continue in the south Ranchi region* among the Mundas and Oraons where the stone memorials are still traditionally cut by the metal workers *i.e. Lohar and Malhar*, and continues into the Chotanagpur region where the copper bronze casting tradition is continued by the Gadawa. These people cut the memorial stones as well as cast copper-bronze an-iconic images traditionally used in tribal worship and more recently iconic Hindu images. The wives of these metal workers are the traditional godna-karis or tattooists using the design and patterns used in the meso-chalcolithic rock paintings of Hazaribagh. It will clearly seem that the rock paintings were the work of the iron-working societies who had earlier in Hazaribagh been the copper and bronze working artisans who created the Bronze age in Jharkhand, slowly moving southward, then westward, toward the Chattisgarh region of Bastar and may be found in the metal-casting Gadawa. The Asurs of Khunti, Basia, Ranchi, and Lohardaga including 29 sites excavated by Rai Bahadur S.C Roy and Sir. Edward Gait 1914-20 in the District of Ranchi has established a Chalcolithic Civilization commensurate with and prior to the Harappan Civilization. The Chalcolithic stage of culture in Chotanagpur was well established by a decent collection of copper artifacts lying in the Provincial Museum at Patna. They comprise copper ornaments of various patterns, copper and bronze vessels, plates, toys, magiea human figures and wheeled animals. In all districts of Jharkhand, particularly in Ranchi, Palamau and Manbhum copper artifacts and especially axe-heads have been found. The specimens of copper axes from Basia in Ranchi district, and Hanu village in Palamau were found by Roy in 1915 and the authority J.Coggen Brown of the Geological Survey of India held that they belonged to the period of transition from the Neolithic to Chalcolithic *which in India is around 4000 BC*. That a period of civilization contemporary with or even prior to Harappa existed across the north of India in the Chalcolithic, and that Chotanagpur or Jharkhand was part of this civilization is glaringly obvious. Traces of this civilization have been found by myself in a copper hoard of similar artifacts as those excavated by Roy at Ranchi including anklets, bracelets, waist band, etc. at Tandwa in the Upper valley of the river Damodar in Hazaribagh. It was further reported

that a Japanese industrialist had gathered some palaeolithic tools near Ramgarh in the lower valley. Myself I have brought to light both an ancient pebble chopper stone tool culture in the hills overlooking the Barkagaon valley as far back as the Early Plerstocene over one million years old, horsehoof hammerstone of Late Plerstocene (130,000 BP) into a middle Palaeolithic hand-axe culture 50,000-10,000 BP overlapping a microlithic industry (20,000 BP) upto a composite Neolithic (6,000 BP) and Megalithic culture (6,000 BP) in the company of thirteen pre-historic rock caves containing a continuous artistic tradition from 20,000-2000 BP. Who could have been the painters of this cave art ? The nomadic Birhors claim their ancestors painted these caves with magic symbols and this is largely evident from the shamamstic cave drawings of the Satpahar hills in the Damodar valley whose images, including *deer-horned* deities (Rik) are still found in the isolated fragments of Birhor art used as “medicine”. The more recent paintings such as those found at Isco and Raham in the North Karanpura Valley present a ritual symbolic art deeply imbued with box-like compound forms common to Mesopotamian and Mayan scripts, and which have been traced by me to the modern *Mandala* used in rituals; The people who painted the more recent paintings have not disappeared since the wheeled votive animal deity painted by the Kurmis in the cattle festival of Sohrai may still be found in the Isco cave-art ! Hundreds of forms found in the cave paintings have been shown by me to be well-established ritual forms still painted during the ritual marriage paintings (Kohbar/Khovar) and the Sohrai. It would seem to me from a long study of both the artforms and the tribes of the Hazaribagh region that the fittest candidates for painting the later phase of ritual rockart in Hazaribagh are the metal-workers, who I believe also erected the megaliths, and moved southward under brahmanical pressure some time during the first millennium BC. Their place as migratory peoples may be a direct result of constant such pressures, prior to which they were obviously sedentarized by the evidence of the vast megalith sites, including urn burials, which they left behind. That both the raising of small megaliths and urn burial was used by the Mundas is also in the evidence and much of the cave art was perhaps also the work of early Munda societies, since we are invariably finding ancient Munda villages next to the rock paintings in villages set on deep beds of iron-ore workings, so it seems the Asurs and Mundas were once closely related and divided due to some difference, which is evidenced by the Asur Kahani and opposite versions, one favoring the Mundas, the other the Asurs, both jealously upheld by both the tribes. The Mundas use large megalith burial grounds such as Choka Hateu (Place of Mourning) between Bundu and Baranda east of Ranchi covering seven acres and having as many as seven thousand megaliths ! The Mundas never referred to themselves by this title Munda which means “head-man”, and called themselves merely “Horo-ko” which means “humans”. Similarly the Birhors call themselves “jungle-men” (Bir-Hor) connections between the Asshur of Assyria and the Asur have long been suggested, and perhaps such contact had once existed via the Indus. Another old tribal group are the Tirkeys who had their forts at Khunti and Doisa. According to S.C Roy both the Asur and Tirkeys preceded the Mundas in Ranchi (S.C Roy , *The Mundas and Their Country, Man in India, Ranchi, 1912/1995, p.89*) . That the Australoids such as the Santals occupied a place in the creation of the Harappan Civilization and that their traditions trace their way back eastward from there along with some Mundas and Oraons, other Kol and Dravidian races cannot be denied. The valley of the Ganges is littered with Kol sites and place-names including megaliths. The theory put forward of the Santal sacred script being linked with the Harappan sealings has been pursued diligently by several scholars prominent among whom is N.K.Verma of Bhagalpur. This migration



eastward is noted by the Santal scholar D. Barka Kisku in his great book *The Santals and their Ancestors*.

— The Naga race devoted to the worship of the snake takes its root in the North-east region of India as its eastern most point since such a phenomenon does not go eastward into Burma, northeastward into China (where the Land of the Tiger begins) nor into Tibet in the north. It is a snake cult which traveled from the Naga Hills by way of the sea to Mesopotamia and Egypt after the Mesopotamian King Myan-mar visited Burma via the Bay of Bengal (L.A Waddell, 1925) and later on the symbol of the snake was adopted by the Kushika dynasty of Pharaohs in Egypt. The snake genealogy worship of the Naga consists of worship of the female five hooded Cobra of the genus *Naja* of Asia and Africa capable of expanding the skin of the neck to form a flattered hood, a supra-natural creature which is capable of standing upright with its hood fully extended whose festival is celebrated on the 5<sup>th</sup> of Shraavan in the middle of the monsoon in July-August.

There is clear evidence of a river valley megalithic migration in the pre-Ahom period starting from Nagaland and Meghalaya down the valley of the Brahmaputra but keeping to the hilly areas so that the megalithic culture of Assam slipped over to the Jharkhand region. These cave worshipping tribals looked upon the Naga as emerging from the earth-womb (*chut*) and were called the Chutya Nagas from which the name Chota-nagpur was derived. Still today the Mongolian influence of the Northeast may be seen in the tribals of Jharkhand both Protoaustraloid and Dravidian owing to racial intermixing and carrying the evidence of ancestry of the language families. This clearly shows the iron smelters or Asurs under the pressure of several forces both from the northwest down the Ganges valley by brahmanical and tribal settlers, and from the northeast by the Mongoloid tribes, became hard pressured to retreat to the south of Jharkhand and into Chhatisgarh, while a fair amount of both protoaustraloid and Dravidian tribes long resident in the Jharkhand hilly region from time immemorial carried on the ritual, sacred, and agricultural traditions while the migratory metal workers largely left the region. Such aboriginal tribes included Bhumij, Rajwar, Mahato, Kurmi, Goda, Kamar, and Kumhar of Manbhum; the Chero, Ahir, Kharwar, Bhogta of Palamu; Gowala, Malhar, Teli, Koeri, Hajam, Kumhar, Barhi/Rana, Ganju, Turi, Kurmi in Hazaribagh; Gowala, Tanti, Kurmi, Kamar in Sighbhum; Chik Baraik, Mahali, Pasi, Lohar, Bhogta, Rantia, Garait in Ranchi. Scheduled Caste status has been conferred on these tribes semi-Hinduizing them, while those retaining their Schedule Tribe status still include the Protoaustraloid Mundaric-speaking tribes which are today including, Munda Birhor, Santal, Bhumij, Ho, Kada, Turis, Asuri, Korwa, Kurku, Kharia, Ganju, Juang, Savara, Gadaba.

Many of these tribes may directly or indirectly (i.e. language/features) be seen to have links with the Northeast, while such tribes as the Kolarian Santal and Dravidian Oraon of Hazaribagh and Ranchi, the Malto-speaking Pahariya of Rajmahal Hills, and the Bhuiya and Birhor seem to have a social commonality as also with the Baiga of Madhya Pradesh. The Asurs, whose presence was noted in the Chalcolithic finds of S.C Roy in the Ranchi plateau, and who moved to the Netarhat Range from the Ranchi plateau, and carried on a meager tradition of iron-ore smelting where Verrier Elwin the last great British ethnologist in India visited them some time around 1963 and noted,

“I myself first visited the Asurs of Netarhat when I was writing a book on the Agaria iron workers of Madhya Pradesh in 1940... When I went again to Netarhat nineteen years later for the Committee on special Multipurpose Tribal Blocks I must admit that I was a little disappointed-

“The smelting and smithy industry had almost entirely disappeared, and it seemed to me the changes in the Asur’s life, with some exceptions, were not always for the better. In my Report I wrote that:

“Surely where iron is in the blood of a small tribe, efforts should be made to encourage it. The Asur seem to have given it up when their forests came under official control and they could not obtain sufficient wood for charcoal.” (Forward, dated 18<sup>th</sup> Feb 1963 at Shillong to K.K.. Leuva, The Asur, 1963)

Now the Agaria and the Asur while related are perhaps different to the Gadawa and Malhar working bronzes, by tin-smithying, but in my examination of the designs in the metal-work I found similarity with many of the rock-art designs. Also, in view of the continuance of these people’s hewing of stones for megaliths for Munda and Oraon tribes I connect them with the original megalith builders. And in doing so I lay my belief in their being the first copper workers of Jharkhand and perhaps of the whole of India for the single reason that Jharkhand also produced tin, which was known from very early times as the alloy, which when mixed with copper, produced bronze ! In my view Jharkhand was the source of tin for the Harappan bronze age.

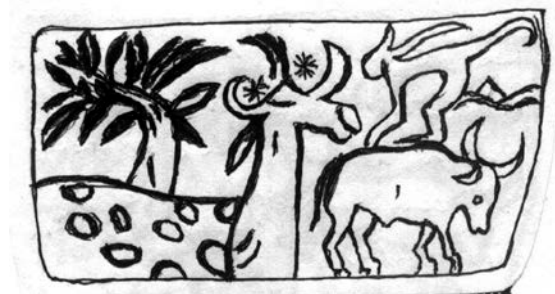
It is notable that the first caste survey was in the Topographical survey of 1868 under Capt. Depree which furnished the number of 96 tribes in Chota Nagpur, *which number remained unchanged in the Census report of 1931*. The next Census undertaken in 1941 by WG Archer, while attempting to de-list tribes from a caste status had the unfortunate effect of attracting the attention of the government for a need to classify semi hinduized aboriginals under a separate caste status which led to the creation of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe categories under the Constitution, and which completely undercut the whole edifice of tribal solidarity. It is of interest to note that Capt. Depree’s survey in 1868 was undertaken to list the emigrants from Chota Nagpur to Assam and Cachar ! It is of further interest that I sit and write this in the old building that housed the Tea District Labour Supply Association office in Hazaribagh where the tea garden labour was being then recruited ! It is finally remarkable that this ancient building has been my house ever since 1951 and on its wall is carved a plaque which reads Wellwa.son/Tea District Labour Supply Association, April 1919 !

## Significance of Sohrai

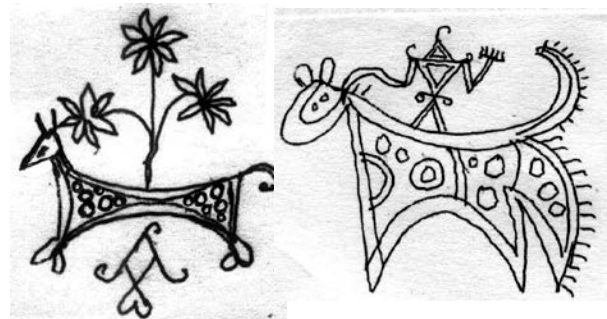
The mother goddess of the Eiyar hunter tribes in south India is depicted as riding on the back of a stag when she is called *Durga*, her accoutrements being the same as Shiva's wearing hair piled in a *Jatha*, encircled by a small snake, a crescent moon of boar-tush on one side, a necklace of tiger teeth, girdled with a tiger skin, holding a bow; The same deity appears in the later manifestation as the tree form of the goddess on the back of the buffalo in Harappa. The same motif, including spotting of cattle and spotted cattle forms in the mural paintings of Sohrai in Bhelwara in Hazaribagh is found. Sometimes the animals are shown on wheels. An identical spotted animal on wheels has been found in the rock art of Isco in Hazaribagh dated at 6000 B.C.

The same motif is found in the Sohrai Khuntan of the Kurmis in Bhelwara which is of interest since the Kurmis and the Santals are believed to be related. What has to be understood above everything else is the clear possibility of a commensurate level of culture in Hazaribagh as that of Harappa. Since the Harappan evidence is found to coincide with contemporary Hazaribagh culture it is clear the two are related. This does not necessarily mean that Hazaribagh is a later period culture, since we have evidence of a similar Chalcolithic culture to Harappa and Ahar in Hazaribagh. The Ahar culture in the eastern Aravallis in Rajasthan (near Udaipur) has evidenced *Khovar* (reversed slip) sgraffito designs on pottery similar to Hazaribagh dated to before the third millennium BC.

Recently archaeology has brought to light the decorated pottery of the Ahars dated 4000 BC in Balathal –Bhilwara on the Banas river, near modern Udaipur in the eastern Aravallis in Rajasthan, which is of the *Khovar* “sgraffito” technique! This technique, referred to as “reversed slip” by experts, was seen in only a few shards of the Harappan site of Mohenjodaro and Surkotada dated around 2400 BC and seems to be more ancient and the Harappan prototype. This technique, similar to *Khovar* is a potter's art-form, and consists of putting a second slip over the lower one and cutting design in bands to reveal the decorative motifs in wavy and straight lines, criss-cross patterns, and a twin colour similar to our *Khovar* art in Hazaribagh. Since the motifs of *Khovar* “reversed slip” may be traced to six and more thousand years old rock paintings in Hazaribagh it is certain that it precedes the Balathal art. This suggests a westward migration of the art form from Hazaribagh!

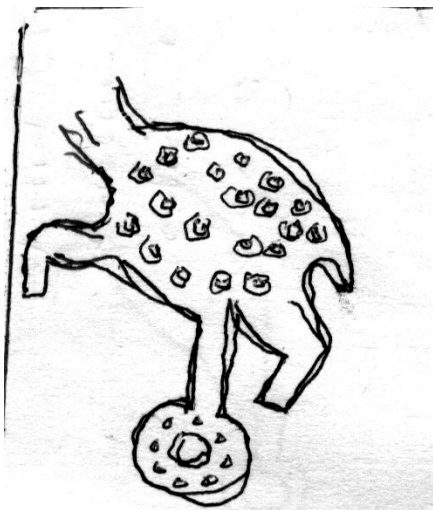


*Sohrae Khuntan, Harappa, c.2000 BC*  
(Contemporary)

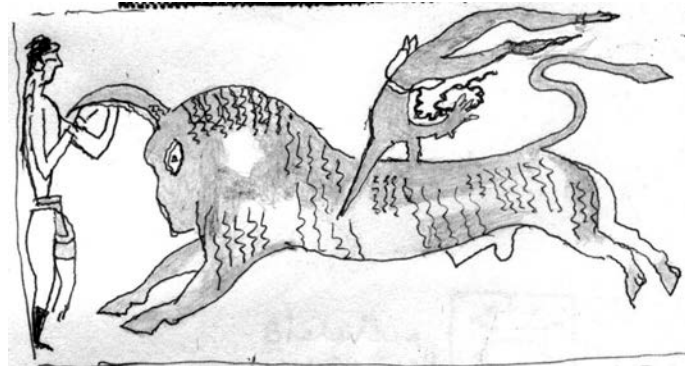


*Sohrai Khuntan, Bhelwara, Hazaribagh,*

The Harappan seal illustrated depicts what sandals call “Irritation of the Bull” in the Sohrai Khuntan. This is shown by a man leaping over the back of the bull similar to the bull leaping of the Cretans in the bull cult of Minos in Crete, as well as the mock bull fights in village streets during the Spanish cattle festival, and the South Indian Cattle festival of Pongal which takes place in the middle of January. A similar mock bull fight is staged during the Sohrai Khuntan among the Kurmis of Bhelwara in Hazaribagh during the harvest festival of Sohrai in October-November. The Santals of Hazaribagh (Manjhi) who live close by do not celebrate this Sohrae festival of the Kurmis, which is of note . The Santals celebrate the Gora Parob similar to the South Indian Pongal in January, which is strictly a cattle festival. However, in the Godda and Dumka region of Santal Parganas, the more developed Santals celebrate the Sohrae Khuntan in October-November. The *Manjhis* of Hazaribagh live in jungles, and are not Hinduized. This cattle festival takes place in mid January and is very similar to the Khond festival of Porho Jatra. However, the Porho Jatra of the Khonds is a bloody festival, probably a carry-over of the human sacrifice (*Meriah*) in which the bull is fought and killed and the flesh divided among the villages assembled. I have personally witnessed and written about it in the Phulbani-Baliguda area of Orissa in 1979. The significance of cattle links it to the Pongal cattle festival of South India in which the horns of the cattle are decorated with turmeric and vermilion and bells tied around the neck and the animals paraded along the streets when young men try to catch the horns, as witnessed also in Crete where bull leaping was a rituals sport of the Minoan bull cult. There is reason to believe the myth of the unicorn in the Indus seals arises from a mis-representation of the side view representation of the “toreador” event. The Khond Porho Jatra is also in my opinion a continuance of the human sacrifice (*Meriah*). In Spain also during the harvest festival young bulls are still paraded in the streets and the young men try and touch the horns. All this seems to lead upto the famous Spanish bull fight.



*Wheeled Animal, Isco rock-art, Hazaribagh  
C. 5,000 B.C*



*“The Toreador Fresco”, Cretan, 1500 B.C*

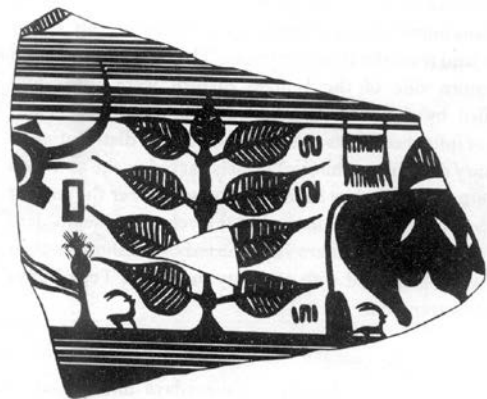
The early Harappan period closes with the transitional phase in Nausharo ID, Amri III A, C.2,600 to 2,550 BC. leading to the Mature Harappan phase. There is a great deal of locally produced Kot Dijian pottery decorated with the “fish-scale” and “Concentric circle” motifs that are the hallmark of the Mature Harappan period, in which large dishes and other vessels are decorated with Sohrae Khuntan motifs, and which are prototypes of the later Kulli Ware of southern Baluchistan which would also be an area which show Oraon transference

between Harappa and Hazaribagh (A.Parpola, Deciphering the Indus Script, 1994 p.160-165). In the Nausharo and Kulli motifs illustrated the tree to which the sacrificial bull is tethered itself stands upon a small triangular stand (seen in Assyrian motifs sometimes as a vase), (Nausharo) and to a stake (Kulli) reminiscent of the stake to which victims were tied during Vedic and Hindu rituals (Parpola, p.21). The three Zebu bulls in the Nausharo illustration is very pertinent. Uptil now the three or more types of trees represent the deity in the Khovar of Hazaribagh. Assigned the role of Siva by some, they infact represent the subdued mother goddess as a result of patriarchalism. The bull was also a cult object in Harappa as shown in the Sohrae Khuntan seal which is illustrated along side a traditional mural of Sohrai from Bhelwara in Hazaribagh, with identical Spotting and curled fish-head depicting An (Parpola, p.185) also found on the horned head of Pashupati in Sohrai, with two asterisks between the horns that are an ancient Babylonian sign of God. In the Sohrai art of Bhelwara a human figure on the back of the bull is very common. This figure is called Shiva or Pashupati. Since the tradition of deities as riders of horses is common in Bastar also and it may be connected as rider standing on horse (Ghoda) holding the rein is a very common Sohrai motif.

To sum up the various points which we have here looked at in the seal of the “Irritation of the Bull”, the Harappan seal presents us with five outstanding messages. First, (a) the tree on the back of the buffalo on the left is a *ficus*, representing the mother goddess in Harappa, and which tradition we can see is still carried on by the Kurmi tribals of Bhelwara in Hazaribagh. (b) the buffalo is spotted similar to what is still done on live animals and murals in Bhelwara and which was also found on the wheeled spotted votive animal from the meso-Chalcolithic rock-art of Isco in the North Karanpura Valley. (c) the human figure on the back of the bull on the right in the Harappan seal possesses three supernatural attributes – tail, wing, horn, and bull-leaping significance. (d) between the horns of the buffalo on the left is the Mesopotamian sign for father god, and asterisks \* . (e) on the crown of the buffalo is the plume symbolizing the mother Goddess among the first marsh dwelling agricultural societies in lower Tigris-Euphrates delta in Mesopotamia in 4000 BC.



*Three Zebu bulls tethered to the Ficus, etc.,  
Painted pottery , Early Harappan, Nausharo ID, 2600 B.C*



*Bull tied to stake,  
Painted Pottery, Early Harappan, Kulli, 2600  
B.C*

The highland, rugged, and naturally well fortified plateau of Chotanagpur would not have easily allowed migration of peoples from the Indus into this tribal inhabited region with its own great tribal civilization evidence of which is abundant. The same may be said of Bastar

and the Chhatisgarh and Koraput highlands which evidence a pre Aryan Civilization of their own. There is moreover no evidence at all of a Chalcolithic migration from the Indus valley conquering the Chotanagpur and Jharkhand regions. There are scholars such as S.C.Roy, the doyen of Indian ethnology, who would like to give this appearance (The Mundas and their country, 1912, p.89). It has been moreover held by scholars like Mangobinda Banerjee (An Historical outline of Pre-British Chotanagpur, 1993, p.131)

When I have walked from place to place in the hilly regions of Hazaribagh I have been continuously struck by the number of stone implements and shards of finely made pottery I have found rivers in the Vicinity of villages, some times a kilometer from the present stream which may have altered course or been dried out by damming and agriculture within its basin. Conversely, when I have moved in the remote forested tracts, especially in the eroded parts, I have regularly collected heavier stone tools and crude hand axes. In the upper water courses of all streams in the Hazaribagh district the nooks and crevices between the rocks have yielded fine microlithic blades and other stone “knives”. This clearly points to a wide advanced habitation of the entire region from time immemorial by autochthonous groups who subsequently sub-divided into tribes. To try and show that present tribes dwelling in the Jharkhand area are non- autochthonous or non-related to these earlier stone-tool making ancestors is a purely racist attempt to deprive the Adivasi of the right over his homeland and birthright and must be condemned in no uncertain terms by qualified research and scholarship. Moreover, the direct connections between pre-Vedic culture and later Jharkhand culture readily yields the “joints” where the new brahmanical or Hindu culture has been joined to the older existing tribal religion with emergent Hinduism. It is precisely in these regions that I would choose to wander and show that modern Hinduism is nothing but an amalgam of a Vedic pantheon of non-Indian (Iranian) deities welded onto an existing aboriginal religious system, whose evidence exists historically in the Puranas. Nowhere in the history of Indian Civilization is adequate mention made of India’s anthropological greatness. The history of a country should begin properly with the history of its anthropological, pre-literate, and pre-historic antecedents. If those antecedents still possess living pre-literate traditions relating to this pre-historic phase and glorifying its pre-historic traditions with mythology or epic tales, then these must be taken into account in listing the early civilization of the country. No country in the world except India begins the account of its history and civilization with the quite recent story of an invading power. The beginning of Indian history and civilization with the non-Indian Aryans would seem to be a racist attempt to hide the greatness of the non-Aryan and pre-Aryan autochthonous civilization of India of which there is great evidence everywhere. India’s history since the most “prehistoric” times may be studied through archaeological discoveries. According to these Harappa and Mohenjodaro, and that network of sister cities and village cultures in the land of the seven rivers -Sapta Sindhu- need not be a subject for greater elation than the recognition of similar civilizational centres in peninsular India, out of which I have taken but two for my personal study- Jharkhand and Chhatisgarh. Moreover, both regions not only display an archaeology which challenges the so called Harappan Civilization, but *also displays a living contemporary Chalcolithic civilization which scholars have either glossed over or overlooked*. This is clear from the bronze working societies of Bastar, and Jharkhand.

The walls of village houses painted with the Khovar murals are rightly representing huge seals to ward evil and present the identity of the owner tribes which lay claim to the particular tract of land where the village stands. Such murals are not peculiar to Jharkhand alone but



may be found all over Bastar and other tribal regions as far away as Bhimbetka and Jammu. It would clearly seem they are manifestations of one civilization under several different autochthonous groups. The appearance of geometrical designs, and compound symbols would seem to be the beginnings of the first stirrings of script. *These tribes are still illiterate and a study can still be made to show how the earliest script develops in a pre-literate people.* The experts have overlooked that the walls of the brick and mud plaster houses of Mohenjodaro and Harappa may have been painted with designs similar to the figures on the steatite seals, and this is what I had suggested long back after bringing to light the Khovar wall mural tradition of Hazaribagh and its deep ancient connection with the region's Mesolithic rock paintings. The yogic figures of An the Yogi. Siva, or any other god you may like to call it is right from the rock paintings given a purely zoomorphic or plant/animal form in the Hazaribagh ritual art ! This condition is still continuing. That there is no evidence for picture writing in Hazaribagh at a level commensurate with or prior to Harappa is equally erroneous because we have picture writing in the region's pre historic rock art as well as the continuing Khovar and Sohrai traditions that represent purely picture writing ! When S.C. Roy compared Harappa with Jharkhand he observed, "*The two cultures have a family likeness-although the difference between them is as great as between an illiterate urchin brought up in rude surroundings and a highly cultured big brother accomplished in various art and sciences...*" (S.C. Roy, Caste, Race and Religion in India, 1912)

This is precisely an opinion in our favour, for the culture of Jharkhand is the earlier and older by several millennia and the wonder of it lies in the fact that it has continued in to present times ! The finding of copper artifacts in these same societies where the Khovar art is still being practiced in the upper valley of river Damodar and its tributaries is a great proof of the continuance of this great civilization for several thousand of years. We may now present the rustic villages of Jharkhand on the stage of human civilization and prove that Jharkhand has not only been the home of primitive man *but also the scene of the birth of Civilization*, from the stone to Copper to Iron ages and down to the present times !

The origin of the Brahmi script has been found by me in the Khovar art of Hazaribagh. The Maheshwari script being formed of crescental arcs was alluded to as being miraculously two parts of Shiva's damru or drum. This was accepted even in the scientific circles . However, the art of Khovar is curvilinear and pictogrammatic and is clearly the basis of the Brahmi forms, as I have shown in my paper 'Origin of Maheshwari Brahmi Script in the crescental Khovar tribal totemic signs' (Publ.24 Oct.,1999). Once we realize that arcs, circles and broken curved forms are the basis of creating animal and natural form as shown in Khovar, then we immediately understand the significance of the Khovar origin of Brahmi as a script. Khovar is referred to as magico-religious art called *Likhna* , which means "writing". This is the term used in Hazaribagh villages for it. The link between pictures and script, more novel is the understanding of the deep relation between the sounds applied to pictograms and forms. The pictograms of the rock paintings are revealed in the village art of Khovar in a series of curvilinear representations of forms. The Khovar is a prehistoric art linked with the pre-historic rock paintings of the Damodar catchment as old as over 20,000 BC.

The Crescent is an idea form, executed in a single sweep of the hand, which when fused with other crescentals creates both pictogram and animal form. It is the source of alphabets. (see Appendix for illustration)

## Megaliths, Mother Hills, and Dolmens of Hazaribagh

The megaliths of Hazaribagh enter this changing scene with a peculiarly forceful implication and consequence because they are the evidence of a pre-Vedic civilization and culture in Jharkhand. In irrefutable evidence in stone that Hazaribagh places on the world's archaeological and cultural map the evidence for the evolution of tribal religion from the most hoary antiquity till the present with no evidence of brahminical Hinduism. The megalith tradition is pre-hindu phenomenon. The sheer mathematical complexity of the megalithic arrangement of Hazaribagh is mind boggling in scale and accuracy. The time frame predates the Vedic period by several millennia. While the brick and stone forts were the evidence of an ancient Mundaric people, the megaliths are the evidence of a race familiar with archaeoastronomical geometry, sacred formations in palaeolithic and megalithic orientation of sites, and the measurement or mensuration of vast areas of land in an extraordinary feat of mapping. There has recently been advancement of a theory that these efforts were related to astronomical phenomena around 10,500 BC when the constellations had a peculiar structure. These alignments are circular and triangular and aligned to solstice and equinox and gives us an idea of the peculiar manner of worship of these people whoever they were. The megalithic culture as ancestor worship, as I have observed elsewhere in this work is a flourishing fact in South Jharkhand in Khunti and the villages along the Koel, Karo, and Sunkh rivers, and throughout their region. The villages of Torpa, Pokhla, Basia, Konbir, Naotoli, Samtoli and Kolebira on way from Khunti to Simdega are all megalith celebrating villages where Christian church is incorporated in the design. Along the Karo in the villages of Tati, Kutungia, Marcha, Rania, Bano, Pakra and Orga we find a plethora of megaliths of the present. Anyone wishing to study the incidence of contemporary prehistoric cultures should visit these areas. Right down into the valley of the Sunkh, in the Oraon villages from Ramrekha to Kurdeg and across the border into Madhya Pradesh and Orissa we find the same megalith culture alive today. Anyone stressing the historicity of Hindu rule in India, its extent and antiquity, needs to go to these regions and follow the megalith trail. We have been overburdened with the so-called supremacy of the Aryan language and its antiquity. We have forgotten to examine our own cultural heritage in Jharkhand and its environs. From Gumla to Kunkuri and Bilaspur, from Kurdeg to Singibihar and the Maria country of Kala-ajar we are on the megalith trail. At Raipur we are in the midst of H.D.Sankhalia's fabled Lanka. Jagdalpur, Kondgaon, Gidaur, Bijapur, Bangra, Jharia are all megalith cultures. In the valley of the Sunkh, from Simdega to Kuchidega, Sawai, Bhadratoli, Jharain, Kunjaba and Baghlata we are steeped in the ancient culture of the megalith. From Jashpur to Kunkuri and along the fabled Ib river at Tapkera, Pandripani, Pharsabahar, Kotba, Baghbahar and Lurek we witness the same phenomenon. We have traced the southwestern environs of Jharkhand, and yet vaster treasures are vested along the forgotten and misty heights of the isolated ranges of the Eastern Ghats in Phulbani, Koraput, Ganjam. This is tribal India.

The worship through megaliths of that essence we call God is as old as man. Practised in the deserts by the Bedouin of Arabia uptill the advent of Islam, prevailing along the Sinai valley before Moses. Taken to South America and Easter Island in the Old World from India. Huge stones erected across the face of Western Asia and the crown of Africa and across Europe from Carnac in Brittany, to the megaliths of the British Isles, Wales, Stonehenge and Avebury, Callanish in Scotland, and the megaliths of Ireland, this is the megalithic world manifested first in Jharkhand. It erupted around about the time of the

earliest agriculture and would forever be associated with the diurnal cycle of the seasons and the equinox and solstice. Its essential importance lay in the geometry and life of the stone itself. Jacob Bronowski has written in his book *The Ascent of Man*, “ When man first discovered the lines upon which stone would crack he discovered the principle of atomic fission.” What he could have added was that fifty thousand years after the flint-knapping Acheulian mind realized this it had entered a vaster understanding of stone as a marker for the heavens upon earth, as the repository of tensile strength in forms laid across the planet, in objects which through their interactions commanded an energy never harnessed before...

The worship of stone as an object such as a Stone of Shiva in ammonites, or the small rounded oblong pebbles found in almost all the votary shrines in the houses of Harappa, are evidence of an association with a deity in some form. Harappa does not evidence a megalithic or earlier culture in stone. Therefore, the megalithic culture of the Northeast had not carried a megalithic tradition to Harappa. On the other hand, neither does Harappa evidence a pre-neolithic culture, not to speak of a palaeolithic culture. The Harappan culture as John Marshall put it, was simply the outpost of a culture and civilization which had its seat --- and foundations--- in Central and Eastern, and Southern India. An even earlier object of worship than the votive stone “lingas” of Harappa was the megalith as a grave marker. It was also a “pointer” or marker of direction with a sacred significance. Among the Birhors of Hazaribagh we have a tradition of Marangburu in which they worship a mountain, not any mountain, but a peculiar mountain. Thus the Sitagarh Hill is worshipped by the Birhors as Marangburu. Literally translated Marangburu simply means Great God. Buru has a patriarchal overtone, whereas Era (i.e. *Jhair Era*, *Gosain Era*) has a feminine gender significance. In the case of the Sitagarha Hill in particular, on the south face there is a sixty feet high face of a deity in stone. This is worshipped as Mahadeva by the Birhors. Further, it is the site of a puja on the night of the Buddh Purnima full moon celebrated in mid-May, which marks the festival of the Lord Buddha. On the top of the stone is a small shrine where milk curds and rice is offered. Earlier on in the afternoon the offering of the milk curds and rice is made in the sacred grove (*sarana*) at the base of the hill. This is also the night on which the hunt council of the Santals sits between the two days of the great annual hunt, *Desom Sendra*. There is a stone statue of Mahadeva which was excavated here which has features resembling this stone face on the south side of Sitagarha Hill, and which is now kept in the local temple. In Canary Hill we have a classic example of the continuity of megalithic cultures through upto present times. The presence of a huge dolmen on the south side of the hill and its precise alignment between the Babenbhai Hill triadic formation and Canary is unique in that the outer edge of the dolmen on this alignment has been shaped to fit the contour of the hill half a kilometre distant ! This dolmen is one of the big rounded frog shaped stones with a small head on north side pointing to the Canary Hill. Further, this site has yielded a vast array of scarification sites with chouks, sacrificial *bali* sites, and dolmens on nearby hills. the most primitive *mandala chouks*, pools for the goddess under these *Mandala, chouks*, and huge heads of primitive deities known to local tribals as the *Bhutaha*, both male and female. Perhaps the most striking discovery has been the figure of the goddess in huge size with the *Yoni* in foetal posture, as well as a series of *yonis* sites in the region. Nearby is a huge dolmen pointer.

In Hazaribagh over fifty megalith and dolmen sites, including stone circles have been found which I will describe later. The frog dolmen may be described. Such a dolmen is to be found near Lahri's house on Canary Hill road, aligned to Matwari pointer stone. Rows

of cupules are found in front of it. Another such dolmen is to be found south of Fatah village. I have already drawn attention to the megaliths of Ranchi and in particular to the great megalithic site of Choka-Hatu mentioned by , S.C.Roy in his monograph on the Munda on the Ranchi-Manbhum boundary on the road from Ranchi to Jamshedpur. Such sites of major megalithic importance abound in Jharkhand. But has it ever been considered that they may be connected, or lie on major alignments ? Such research is being done at the instance of an INTACH project which I have initiated since I saw the significant results possible in such research. The chief researcher, and the champion of many discoveries, is Subhasis Das of Hazaribagh, whose research I will quote. Uptil now the meaning or purpose of these ancient megalithic sites was only hinted at. In the British Isles and England itself the megaliths were studied by such researchers as Julian Cope who produced magnificently illustrated works (Julian Cope, *The Modern Antiquarian, A Pre-Millennial Odyssey Through Megalithic Britain (including a Gazetteer of over 300 sites*, Thorsons, An Imprint of Harper Collins Publishers, 1998). Many researchers are at work on the exact significance of megaliths, which have yielded a little fruit, showing alignments with the sun and moon. None have been as comprehensive as Subhasis Das's work, which I will let speak for itself, with a small summary.

The first thing which Das discovered was that individual hills, such as a hill called Choti Silvar in the east side of Hazaribagh had an amazing number of geometrical alignments using various geometrically shaped stones taking a number of astrologically significant shapes depending on the alignments they were viewed from and resulting in an exposition of Vedic geometry in which study he was assisted by Dr. B.N.Mishra, Head of the Department of Mathematics at the Vinobha Bhave University, Hazaribagh. The second thing which Das's discoveries turned up was that these alignments were connected with Mother Hills either in the form of (a) the mother goddess as a recumbent landscape figure (which formed a particular angle). The hill resembles a supine pregnant woman, and this has long been known to the North American Indian and the Gauls of Europe and given the name by researchers of Recumbent Landscape figure (RLF) such as the Sitagarha mother hill illustrated, or simply triangular, when they fall into two types (b) the Great Tit as Julian Copes calls it, a simply triangular hill, such a hill is Canary in Hazaribagh, and (c) the triadic hill which Das has brought to light, having a clear three pointed indentation on its crest akin to the cupolas of Mayan temples. It is significant that these cupolas of Mayan temples are, dedicated to a triune deity. Such a hill is Babenbhai in Hazaribagh although the construction of its triadic crest would be an unimaginably arduous feat. From two angles the hill is a perfect pyramid and from the third a triadic pyramid. A stone crusher has all but eaten up the south face of the hill which was the subject of an INTACH campaign, and the stone crushing was stopped. It has recently been suggested by INTACH that the huge gouged out area in the hillside be turned into an open-air auditorium. A marker stone was also brought to light by Das, aligned through two megalith sites with pointer stones with the principal marker at Silvar Hill and the equinox. Additionally, as he continued interpreting a plethora of Megaliths, Dolmens, and Stone Circles in Hazaribagh, *Das was also finding pointer stones confirming these alignments*. Most of the sites were in some manner recognized by the local Bhuiyas who performed pujas there in front of the sites at their own shrines constituted of small stones marked with vermilion. While the Bhuiyas recognize the sacred significance of the megaliths, and carved heads such as the Bhutaha in Canary Hill, they will not touch them. They will perform puja only at rough natural stones whom the also call bhutaha, or their little stone *bonga* sites.

One day Das showed me a new thing. He had actually put a compass on Silvar and found some places of interest on the edge of his circle. This brought out a new possibility. I have always felt the Pankri Barwadi megalith site was a special site. Immediately we put the compass needle on it.... What was revealed on that moonlit night, sitting out under the ancient *pipal* tree in front of my house, may well have repercussions for the understanding of megaliths. It was one of those great moments of realization. Once passed, I understood a milestone had been reached, a new turning point for the study of megaliths. When the compass was placed at Pankri Barwadi an amazing plethora of megalithic sites of Jharkhand and beyond sprang to view !!As we expanded the concentric circles, new sites, *equidistant and on exact alignments to tirth-sthans or places of Hindu worship and megalith sites sprang to view on the periphery of each successive circle.*

The points to which Pankri Barwadi have been connected I will give below, but the wonder of it lies in the accuracy of measurement, taking into consideration hills and valleys, above all plateau formations. Subhasis Das states that when the Pliades rises in the east during the vernal equinox this method of alignment may be used. In this method signal flares are lit atop hills and the distance is measured, perhaps using the compass of the stars at night, to a required distance, where a megalithic site is erected. Such a system works wherever there are hills, not otherwise. In the region of Mecca or in the environs of Sinai it would have worked, and both places have megaliths. But it would not have worked in the flat plains of the Sindh valley, and there we have no evidence of megaliths. For, as we are seeing now, megaliths have a significance beyond the burial of the dead, and more importantly, as the repository of sacred worship sites important in themselves for their placement, and connected with hilly regions to facilitate in making alignments.

The map of Subhasis Das's megalithic sites is given, along with the circles. We have considered extending the circular migration of megalithic sites outward from each individual site, when it will be possible to map the entire Jharkhand region in detail. *The ensuing formation will create an unparalleled lotus formation.* It is not surprising that dozens, nay, hundreds, of mother goddess worship sites have sprung up throughout this tribal region. The mother goddess has been the principal object of worship of the tribals from the close of Neanderthal times 30,000 years ago. Today these sites of tribal goddess worship have been Hinduized and lost their tribal significance. In the list three types of megalithic site are identified 1. the megalith or standing ancestor stone erected in significance of a departed ancestor, and containing beneath it the interred ashes in a pottery urn 2. the dolmen or horizontal stone in memory of the mother goddess laid at the base of a tree or over burial remains as well, which may also be found in a large frog or tortoise such as the frog dolmen at Lahiri's, Canary Hill Road in Hazaribagh, or the tortoise dolmen recently discovered by Das at the Bodhayana-Shila site at Silver, and in the Canary Hill dolmen. In each case the head points to some important marker. 3. stone circles, which are sites of sacred cult observances. All sites may be aligned to either of three places A winter equinox B. summer solstice C. other megalithic site.

## Connections with the Northeast Megalithic Civilization

Some astonishing discoveries have been made in the archaeology of Southeast Asia during the last fifty years. European and American historians have generally theorized that what they call civilization first took root in the Fertile Crescent of the Near East, or on its hilly flank. There we were told, primitive man began agriculture and learned to make pottery and bronze. Discoveries since then, in Southeast Asia, have brought to light an earlier age of cultivation and bronze making. Much of this evidence is from the north of Thailand, Taiwan, North and South Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Northern Australia. Carbon 14 dating here has shown the making of polished stone tools and pottery thousands of years earlier than in the Fertile Crescent, India or China. In 1932, in the traditional view of prehistory in Southeast Asia, Robert Heine-Geldern an Austrian anthropologist suggested that culture was brought to Southeast Asia from China. He called this culture Dongson, after a site. However, the existence of a Hoabinhian culture working on the opposite trend, indigenous to Southeast Asia, had first been proposed in the 1920s by Madeleine Colani a French palaeontologist. She based her opinion on evidence from rockshelters in North Vietnam at the site of Hoa Binh. Subsequently, Spirit Cave in Northern Thailand yielded well developed corded pottery and polished stone tools from levels carbon dated to 9,700 BC. In the opinion of American anthropologist Wilhelm G. Solheim the first domestication of plants in the world began around 15,000 BC in the Hoabinhian culture. He also opined that edge-ground stone tools found in northern Australia and dated by carbon 14 belonged to 20,000 BC and were of Hoabinhian origin. He has shown evidence for sea craft around 4,000 BC in Southeast Asia. These people had a geometric art style – spirals and triangles, rectangles and band patterns, used in decorating pottery, wood carvings, tattoos, bark cloth (tapa), and later woven textiles. (Wilhelm G. Solheim II, *New Light on a Forgotten Past*, University of Hawaii, 1971) which very likely had connections with India both via the sea as well as land routes through the Chin Hills and Nagaland. Recent C-14 dating obtained from DNA samples in 60,000 year-old human bones from Lake Mungo in Australia places irrefutable evidence of early man on that continent long before evidence of sea craft. It has further strengthened the belief of archaeologists in individual pockets of human evolution in continental regions, as opposed to the common candelabra theory of human migration out of Africa popular with old-fashioned archaeologists.

There has been negligible archaeological research in the Northeastern hill states of India. There is evidence of a very early contact between the hill states and Southeast Asia and also for the existence of an advanced civilization in the Brahmaputra valley as far back as the Neolithic. At the site of Ambari in Guwahati a pre-Ahom civilization was brought to light by Prof. M.C. Goswami in 1969. Large quantities of sculptures and ancient bricks and pottery of fine Kaolin clay devoid of slip or wash were discovered. Many globular jars with flaring rim and short neck, flat-based goblets and sharp-rimmed cups were also found (*Source of the History of India, Vol.30, p.79-80*). This type of pottery is found in other places of the Brahmaputra valley, such as Tezpur, Devaka, Nowgong, Etc. Assam was known to the Shan as Brahmadesa. As I had earlier pointed out, the cattle of North India are derived from the long-backed humpless Auroch cattle of Africa whose depictions occur in the Tassili-N-Ajjer rockart of the northeastern Sahara. This great cattle *Bos primigenus* is believed to have met up with the short-backed cattle of Northeast India, the small humped cattle of Manchuria and China which are the typical variety of Southeast and South Asia called *Bos nomadicus* and probably first developed in these regions. The mixing of the two types in central north India



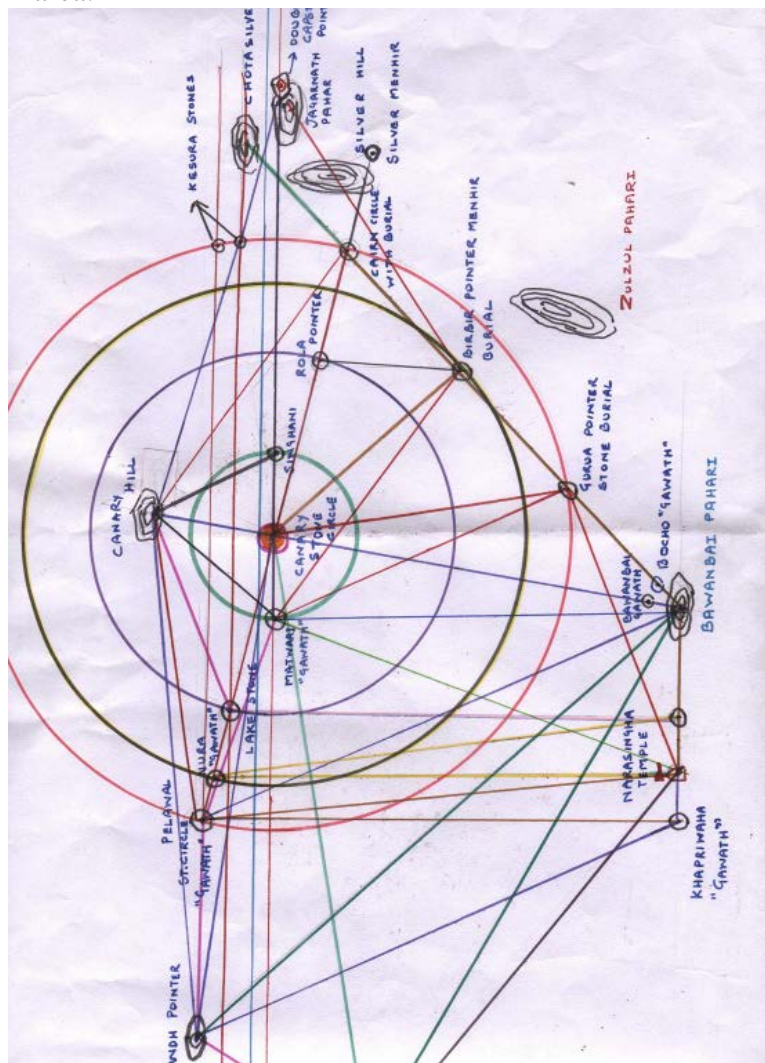
led to the creation of the Zebu humped cattle (*Bos zebu*) This as I have earlier pointed out has to be seen in relation to the cultivation of the *coix indicus* from Banaras to Yunan in China and Japan. The eastern varieties of the earliest rice were of the *Coix indicus group*, and included the Aus and Aman rice of India, the Tjerch and Bulu of Java, the Hsien and Keng of Yangtze, and it is believed that the first cultivation of rice started in the Brahmaputra valley with its wide floodplains, which still form the great ricefields of Bangladesh and West Bengal. The Ahoms who peopled Assam from Southeast Asia after the fourteenth century are comparative new-comers with their distinctive Thai culture of Rongoli and Bihu (from Thai words, *Boi* meaning “to worship”, *Hu* meaning ox.) The washing of cattle during the Bihu festival, which coincides with the springtime *Sarhul* of the adivasis of Chotanagpur has a strange similarity with the cattle festival of the Santals of Hazaribagh and the Khonds of Phulbani in Orissa during the same time. The tradition of erecting megaliths is endemic to the Assam tribes. According to A.C.Haddon the Mundas were the original inhabitants of the Ganges valley and were linked with Indonesia. A study of the geography of the eastern region will show the Ganges valley lying at sea level from Lucknow to the Bay of Bengal, and northeast to the Garo, Khasi, and Jaintia hills, and further, the Dafla and Naga hills. To the south lies the Chotanagpur plateau.

Meghalaya is chiefly inhabited by Khasi tribes whose mortuary rites and rituals are closely linked with monolithic memorial stones. All across Meghalaya we find these huge stone monoliths. In Khasi a megalith is called *Kinmou*, recalling the name *Mouai* used by the Easter Islanders to refer to their giant stone heads. Both names refer to the face, *Mou* or mouth. In Hindi *Mou* means mouth. When a child is first fed solid food the ritual that takes place is *Mou-jhuti*. *Jhuti* means “touched by”. Megaliths or vertical stones have a male significance, as I have pointed out and dolmens or horizontal stones have a female significance, and the megaliths with greater size or round tops represent elders. These are called *Moukni*. Dolmens are found at Nartiang and in the Jaintia Hills, at Laet Inkot in the Khasi Hills. The Khasis respect the dolmen as the mother goddess *Ka-Yobayi* and the upright megalith as the father god *U-Jhalang*. Dolmens are placed on an East-West axis. Research has been done on the megaliths of the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos but little has been done to understand their connection with the similar megalithic culture of the Jharkhand region, with specific regard to the megaliths of the Pahariyas of Rajmahal Hills and Mundas of Ranchi. It is in the background of this living culture that the prehistoric megalithic remains of North Chotanagpur and Rajmahal Hills require to be studied. Also, we have to study the megalithic tradition across Jashpur to Bundelkhand and along the Eastern Ghats, the Deccan Plateau, and South India. The civilization in the Brahmaputra around which the Naga, Dafla, Garo, Khasi, Jaintia, Mizo and Chakma revolved was complimentary to the civilization of Western Rarh pointed out by P.R.Sarkar referred to in this work, which was in the context of the Rajmahal, Chotanagpur, and hill tracts of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa megalithic culture along the Mahanadi, and other rivers. Thus the valleys of Kamsavati, Suvarnarekha, Damodar, Ganges and Brahmaputra create a vast region for researches. It is my belief that the megalithic culture was older than any as yet found in a river valley civilization. The copper hoards of Midnapore and Ganges dhoab require to be reassessed in terms of an East India river valley civilization as far back as 5000 BC. The Khasis use megalithic funerary customs common to Breton tradition, and the Christian Church has adopted the megalithic structure into the sacred formation of the altar, belltower, church wall, etc., as had been done earlier in Ireland and Wales by Christian missions and found in some places in South Ranchi area. In Hazaribagh the Fatah megalithic site has yielded rows of funerary urns with crematory relics

of pelvic, clavicle, tibia, fibula, and frontal cranium pieces, identical to the burials of the Urnfields People of Ireland and Western Europe. Again, in Bhagwantola, a large urn containing funerary crematory remains was found under a large standing megalith. Munda disinterment and cremation as practiced earlier in Hazaribagh, and in some places still in use is also a common Aboriginal custom in Australia, when cremated bones are stored in similar form in hollow Totem poles. It is an ancient aboriginal custom around the summer solstice to exhume, cremate, and re-bury remains in funerary urns, which is similar to the Aboriginal custom in Australia of placing the remains in hollow poles. The megaliths are always found in rows and in large numbers, sometimes under a roughly elliptic arrangement; Chokahatu to which I have earlier referred, between Bundu and Baranda, is literally meaning “Place of Mourning”. It covers seven acres and has thousands of memorial stones. The Khasis call the fifth erect megalith from the right side Mongni (as in Laetkar village) meaning “Maternal Uncle” (*mamoo*). One megalith to its right and another to its left are known as *Kimon-persa-kipara* which means “Memorial of Cousins and Nephews”. The flat dolmen before the megaliths are called *Ka-Yobayii-Tismien* or memorial dedicated to the mother goddess. In Thethangi village in North Karapur Valley there are about fifteen megaliths, one over thirteen feet in length, lying down.

These are up against the side of the hill to the north of Bandey Oraon’s house, on the way to the rock shelter containing rockart. In Benti, on the south side of the Ashoka mine is a big cluster of megaliths which the villagers describe as a party of travelers to a wedding who stopped at the village for a rest and were turned to stone. It is an old belief found also in Europe. The head megalith, or Chief, is in the middle, and has a big round head! This is called *Mamoo*, meaning maternal uncle, in line with the Khasi tradition. In Fatah on the main highway connecting Hazaribagh to Barkagaon, and the Pankri Barwadi site ten kilometres down the road are major megaliths near Hazaribagh. Pankri Barwadi is also a microlithic site and evidences iron-age. It is an archaeoastronomical site. These ancient megalithic sites have lost their significance for the local villagers. In the Kharati village are found about fifteen or twenty megalithic posts used for storing straw atop them. Their sides are covered with cupules, the marks of the mother goddess. At the Banadag hill on the way to Chatra there is a very large group of megaliths, including two spectacular dolmens with markings of the pregnant goddess. There is no local tradition attached to these megaliths. It is my belief that the present settlers in the village, the Prajapatis, Ranas, etc. may have moved into an earlier megalithic culture as an aftermath of the Bharata war when the Mundas pushed on into more forested sites in the hills where their kinsmen resided. Other megaliths are found at Laranga, Silvar, Rola, Kesaura, Matwari, Nutan Nagar, Babhenbai, Ichak, Mandair, Pugmill, etc. Recently, Subhasis Das found two stone circles and a pointer at Imli Kothi in the heart of the Hazaribagh town. Another large megalith has been found at Pugmill, in the same town. Dolmens of huge size are found at Canary Hill, Fatah, Choti Silvar, Jagganath Silvar, and other places. Stone circles are also found in several places. In the Khasi tradition some megaliths bear individual names such as *Moulainti* for a soul on its journey after death, *Mounam* for the memory of parents and close relatives, and *Mou-umkoi* for one who dies in an accident, Umkoi for a pond where the bones and ashes of the deceased are washed and then taken to be placed in the niche of the *Mou-umkoi* stone. This is a Munda custom. The megaliths are also referred to as *Mou-sinrang*, or the memorials to dead men. The large flat dolmens are for *Mou-kinthayi*, the mother goddess. Food and offerings for the ancestors are placed upon these flat stones, which is perhaps the earliest expression of the altar. The Garos also build these stone memorials like the Khasis and their Jaintia neighbours, calling them

*Kunia*. The interesting thing is the belief that these stones speak to future generations. There are several groups of megaliths in the North Karanpura valley which have been treated with deep respect by the tribals, although their significance has been lost due to the effects of time, many invasions of the region, religious persecutions and enforced displacement. These customs have however, survived in the Ranchi plateau and the valley of the Sunkh river in Simdega-Kurdeg. Especially vibrant is the Munda megalithic culture still living in the Koel and Karo river regions which I have drawn attention to. I attended the megalith raising ceremony in my wife Elizabeth's mother's village in Kunjaba near Kurdeg about eighty kilometers southwest of the district headquarters of Simdega earlier this year. The huge stones had been engraved with the names of the ancestors, one megalith for her mother's father, another for her mother's mother. Elizabeth's family are Roman Catholic Oraons. Both stones had been cut and engraved by the Lohra or ironsmith. They were carried with heavy chains on poles to pits dug and readied to receive them on the edge of the family plot with the names and details of the birth and death of the deceased inscribed on the rock facing outward, towards the village road. This custom continues till today. It is a way to preserve the memory of the Ancestors, and the megaliths are blessed by the Catholic priest among the followers of this faith. The personalized location of the megaliths is novel but is customary in the South Ranchi area.



*(Geometrical formations on the ground of Hazaribagh formed by joining the Megaliths)*

Further research on the megaliths and dolmens of Hazaribagh and their significance has been done by INTACH member Subhasis Das under sponsorship by INTACH, Hazaribagh Chapter . This research has been published and the pertinent parts are herewith reproduced with the author's permission. The map showing the sites of the research is also here illustrated.

Subhasis Das's megalithic map of Hazaribagh showing the configuration of megalithic sites in their linear and circular relationships including standing megaliths, horizontal dolmens, and stone circles requires we look at henges, barrows, or raised circular earthworks around such sites, including mounds (as found in the Neolithic mound at Avebury, Wilts.). All these megalithic sites have to be seen in their relationship with existing settlement geography of their respective regions and other megalithic sites. All have inter-related alignments .The text is reproduced below.

*Excepted from In Quest of the Megalith (A Survey in Hazaribagh), December 2000, by Subhasis Das.*

### **Preface**

Megaliths are a mystery, still unresolved. These megaliths are associated with the cult of the dead. Take any of these stone creations – dolmens of various sizes and types, menhir, cromlechs, large size stone circles of the Neolithic period or the more compact family sized ones of the metal age, most of them are burials. India is perhaps among one of the few countries in the globe where megalithic culture is a living tradition amidst many tribals. In the ancient times the Maria Gonds of Bastar in Madhya Pradesh raised dolmens on many upright stones which they called “*Dania-kal*”, but presently as such dolmens are replaced with a single capstone on a cairn of stone which is “*Marma-kal*” . “*Uras-kal*” were the names provided for the menhirs and their alignments,.

Erecting megaliths on their dead people is yet in vogue among the Bondos and the Gadabas in Orissa,. Their stone circles are called “*Sindhi-bor*”. “*Sodor*” and “*Gunam*” are the names of menhirs and dolmens respectively which they erect for funerary practices. The Nagas and the Khasis in Northeastern India raise dolmens in the memory of dead women which they call” *Mukenthai*”. Huge menhirs called “*Moukni*” in the native tongue are also raised on burials. “Deep in the forests of Hazaribagh in the newly formed Jharkhand State, secluded from much outside influence, the Oraons and the Mundas still raise menhirs on the remains of their ancestors which they call ” *Pathalgada*”. Megaliths are a mystery. The megaliths in Hazaribagh on 24 degrees latitude have revealed to us that they are a product of some kind of an ancient science. The kind which we are unfamiliar with, perhaps. This science was possibly a predominant force then of which we are informed only through ancient texts.

Apart from the books, megaliths are possibly one of the earliest evidences of this scientific knowledge which was an amalgamation of spiritualism and astronomy for the sake of perhaps, astrology or for reasons better known to them. The placing of these megaliths on a particular spot was certainly not an act undertaken unscrupulously or even accidentally. These placements, on the contrary, were a precise, pre-meditated, and a minutely calculated event. Their accuracy of alignments between the megaliths placed even a hundred miles

away, at times were so disturbingly perfect, that they could put even the most modern fastidious surveyor with his modern apparatus to shame.

Megalith raising in Hazaribagh has survived only as a tradition erected now as a habit. The tribals now tend to collaborate these megaliths with ancestor-worship, bonga-worship, or spirit appeasement by way of pig or fowl sacrifices. But the involvement of science which might have been the real cause for their erection is long lost and forgotten and now not a trace of this survives even in their deepest memory, perhaps. However, these days every village in Hazaribagh buries small memorial stones at the end of the village, measuring one foot each in height in the memory of the dead ancestors with his/her name inscribed on it. This seems to be only a memory of the megalithic past, the megaliths however being drastically reduced in size.

### Gazetteer

#### **The” Chota Silver” and the Babenbai Hill alignment:**

##### **The Silver Hill Cairn circle:**

This cairn burial is situated nearly two hundred metres west of the Silver Hill. This hill is presently being used as the firing range by the Border Security Force. Amidst the backdrop of the nerve-wracking roars of the continuous shelling of the hill, one can still get to enjoy the superb science of this magnificent cairn circle.

Six stone slabs ranging from three to five feet lies on the ground as possible covers of this burial. On two slabs are engraved the mother goddess symbols of cupmarks of two rows with eight cupules in each. This signifies that the burial was sanctified by the Devi Ma or the mother goddess. However, the village kids go on to play a Chinese Chequer-type game with pebbles called Diggam in it.

Emerging from the ground are three pointers made of stone, of three relative sizes. The smaller pointer leans at a 60 degree angle to wards the Silver Hill in the east. The medium sized pointer placed just opposite to the smaller one is inclined nearly 40 degrees to the west. The biggest pointer is nearly 48 inches in height, cut out neatly from a bigger chunk of stone, in the shape of an arrow and then polished professionally, and thereafter placing it reclining 60 degrees to the west. These three are in fact multi-purpose pointers. If one stands between these triangular shaped pointers, just 50 degrees to the northeast a few hundred metres away one would see the “triangular hill of Chota Silver. 220 degrees southwest to this cairn circle in the distant horizon vaguely visible by the smog floating in from the burning of coal from the coalfields beyond, is the trident shaped Babenbai Hill.

Match the two small pointers towards the either hills -- the pointers perfectly align the two smaller peaks of Babenbai and the either sides of the Chota Silver. It is an incredible sight. The largest pointer leans 300 degrees northwest to the Canary Hill. The medium size pointer is inclined towards the Canary Hill stone circle, not visible from here. If one notices with a hawk’s eye the edges of the pointers are in fact made parallel to the gradients of both the hills

.This beautiful precision work and knowledge of geometry is required to be seen to be believed.

The Babenbai Hill seen from the north is a shoulderd Pyramid similar to the Mayan Capital of Zigurats. Seen from the eastern or the western sides it obtains the shape od an Isoceles Triangle and from the south it takes on a Pyramidal Shape .

Nearly six feet away from the larger pointer stands a phallus with glans measuring 28 inches in height carved out beautifully from another chunk of stone. If one places one's eye behind the larger pointer towards the Chota Silver one can see the larger pointer, the Phallus and the Chota Silver are in a perfect straight line.A natural huge rock stands on the top of the Silver Hill which has been shaped as a pointer.Standing between the two smaller pointers on the equinox day one can see the sun rising just behind the pointer on the Silver Hill.

### **The Birbir Obelisk and the Gurua Alignment Pointer Stone**

Southeast of the Birbir village stands this beautiful obelisk on a small natural mound. This obelisk is precisely placed on the straight line between Chota Silver, the Silver Cairn Circle (not visible from here), and the Babenbai Hill. The obelisk is approximately six feet in height and seems to have been cut with metal and wonderfully polished and and then placed in an incline of about 60 degrees towards the Babenbai Hill.The burial is nearly four feet away, a slab of stone partially visible forms the cover of the burial.

The Gurua pointer burial lies in the southwest of the Gurua village. There are two pointer stones worshipped as the Gawath Baba or the village god. Two slabs of stones form the cover of the burial which lies between the two pointers. This megalith stands in straight line with the Chota Silver, the Silver Cairn Circle, the Birbir Obelisk, and the Babenbai Hill.

### **The Bocho Gawath**

This small yellow stone is cut and made in an exact smaller replica of the Chota Silver visible vaguely in the distance. It silently rests at the foot of the pyramidal Babenbai Hill. This stone aligns the previous stated megaliths, the Chota Silver, with the Babenbai Hill. This stone is the Gawath of the Bocho village.Once this alignment is worked out on a map the straight line between the two hills made possible with the aid of the megaliths is clearly visible. The megaliths, we can see were used to divide this line in equal segments.

### **The Canary Hill Dolmen**

This magnificent dolmen is placed in what it seems a very ancient cult /tantric site, for the numerous *yonis* made on stone are littered everywhere. On these *yonis* the cup-marks of the mother goddess which are made have literally been worn out through weathering due to great age. This dolmen has a five-ton capstone cut in the rounded manner with the protrusion made on the north side towards the scalene triangle shaped Canary Hill nearly half a kilometre away. The capstone has been cut and placed on four upright stones with intense knowledge of balance. The capstone has been placed in such a deliberate manner that the western gradient of the "Canary Hill becomes absolutely parallel to the western of the

capstone of the dolmen when seen from the angle of its alignment with Babenbai Hill. This entire arrangement of the dolmen is placed on a rocky knob which is placed in alignment between the Canary Hill and the Babenbai Hill on the south four kilometers away.

This site houses a unique Easter Island-type five foot head carved out of a rock and placed on four upright stones. The eye is a rock conglomeration, the mouth is carved out, and the reddish The Canary Hill inner portion is visible. The protruded nose is pointing toward to triangular hill of Tuti in the east. This figure is known to the local tribal medicine-men or Bhagats as Bhutaha, meaning a demon. Below and in front of it is a large head with open mouth. The Bhutaha head is illustrated here with Subhasis Das's son Bumpy standing next to it.

### **The Canary Hill Stone Circle**

This ruined stone circle is also a burial, and now has only two standing stones: one small menhir, nearly four feet in height, and another smaller one about two and a half feet in height. Both these stones stand facing the rising sun. Between both these stones sits a small, triangular pointer stone buried in the ground. Standing up on it one is amazed to find this pointer joining the Babenbai and the Canary Hill in an absolute straight line. This stone circle is oriented towards the Jagannath Hill, and is also aligned to the Silver Cairn Circle which is not visible from here. This megalith is worshipped as the Pakahi Baba of the Jabra village. Pakahi Baba is rated second to the Gawath Baba in hierarchy.

### **The Jagganath Hill**

The Canary Hill Stone Circle is aligned to the most amazing and fascinating hill of them all – the Jagganath Hill. This hill houses the smaller replica idols of the Jagganath Temple in Puri, in wood. This is a mathematical wonder hill. This hill has numerous dolmens, apart from this there are many geometrically shaped stones which have been cut on purpose. Once here, one is of the impression that some giants just finished a geometry class. Let us talk of one stone which is a geometrical miracle-stone cut out of a bigger chunk of stone, polished and then kept in such a purposeful manner that from at least eight sides one sees eight different geometrical shapes of the same stone. The configuration is as under:-

From south :- Pentagon

From north :- Pentagon

From southwest:- Triangle

From northwest:- Rhombus

From northeast:- Hexagon

From southeast:- Parallelogram

From east:- Trapezium

From west:- Trapezium

It is evident from this amazing structure they built was testimony of the fact that their knowledge of geometry was extremely perfect, neither how would they have known how and where to cut and to place it at which angle, so as to get the exact shape they wanted. Note



how the east-west and the north-south shapes have been deliberately made similar. Note the south-west shape of the Bodhayana-Shila which has two triangles in each other. One can work out the Pythagoras Theorem in this. "This stone I have lovingly named the "Bodhayana- Shila " or the Bodhayana Stone as a respect to Bodhayana the world's first geometrician, who had the distinguished record of writing the first ever book on geometry called " Sulbh – Sutram " at around 800 BC. This Bodhayan-Shila has seven observing points made out of stones out of which only five now remain. These observing stones have the same geometrical shape as the Bodhayan-Shila seen from this angle. Recently a large tortoise of a huge boulder carved with amazing dexterity, was found by me at Silver, with its long neck and head pointing directly at the Bodhayana-Shila.

On the northern side of the Bodhayana-Shila is a megalithic apparatus possibly used in the study of the stars or planets, as this equipment is currently used in astrophysics. From the eastern side this megalith takes the shape of a " Cone- on- a- Hemisphere", and from the north it acquires the shape of a Cone-on-a-Pentagon." The edge on the right points to compass east, and the left edge to the north. Nearly seventy metres to the east is another mathematical wonder. Two huge stones cut, shaped, and placed, one on top of the other, and the entire arrangement thereafter placed on four stones. This unusual look of this megalith has forced the villagers to believe these stones have magical powers in them, and they have painted the Lord Shiva on it.

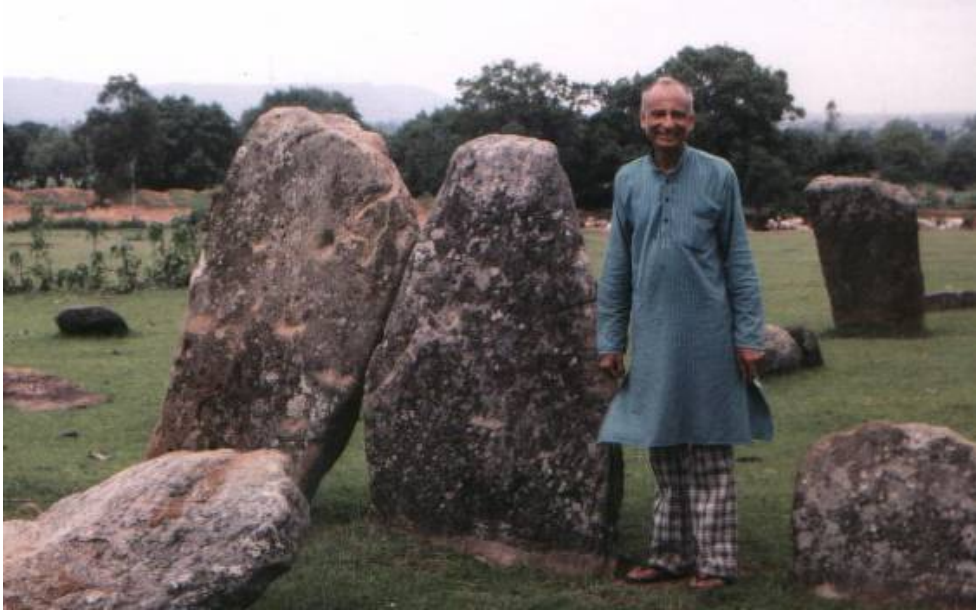
This superb megalith is in fact a pointer pointing to at least mother goddess temple sites from a paltry four kilometer distance to a mother goddess temple at Ichak, to a 300 kilometer (crowfly) to Banaras and a whopping 500 kilometers (crowfly) to the mother goddess temple of Kamakhya in Assam. It is somewhat crazy to believe these were the creations of the stoneage people who knew the exact angles of these sites. But despite all speculations it is true --- as these megaliths do exist in the Jagannath Hill. Their sense of direction was so perfect one can just do nothing save get amazed.

### **Fateh Megalith Site**

Fatah is fifteen kilometers from Hazaribagh on the road to Barkagaon, and has about thirtyfive standing megaliths. Some in a half fallen posture. Rows of small urns containing funerary remains of tibia, fibula, and forehead cranial charred cremated feagments have been found. Earlier this site is speculated to have covered a larger extent but was cut by the road.

### **Pankri Barwadi: Stone Circle on a Mound**

Pankri Barwadi fifteen kilometers down the road to Barkagaon from Fatah, is on the left side of the road on a gently sloping earth mound covering approximately three acres of land and containing a variety of finely made stone tools from flake knives and leaf blades to chert microliths as well as large iron slag deposits which attest to a continuous cultural habitation site. It has several huge standing menhirs, one having a stick figure of a man placed horizontally in the middle, cupules, Etc. It is believed to have had archaeoastronomical significance at the time. On one kilometer to its east is a small hillock with remains of Buddhist statuary.



*Bulu Imam in Pankri Barwadi Megaliths*



*Birbir megaliths with Sitagarha mother hill in background*

## “Other Sites:

At Banadag near Sultana ten kilometers from Hazaribagh town on the road to Chatra there is a major megalith site, where we find upright and horizontal stones, and a remarkable horizontal pregnant mother goddess, as well as the deity beneath a tree which must date to placement in more recent times. Two stone circles were again recently brought to light at Imli Kothi, a southern part of the town. Here there is also a pointer stone. I have also drawn attention to a large megalith at Pugmill. In the Barkagaon valley at Kharati village we will find eight feet high narrow megaliths supporting hay, but the presence of rows of cupules signifies their antiquity and their dedication to the mother goddess cult as well as a patina of pre-history precludes their most recent manufacture as sometimes witnessed in some hayrick pillars in South Ranchi.

South of Tandwa in the Satpahars in the western North Karanpura valley between Bahera and Piperwar we will find twenty large megaliths. In Benti there are about two dozen tall megaliths standing in double rows, with a round-head megalith in the middle. In Thethangi, twelve kilometers north of Bhagwantanr long megaliths can be found at the foot of the hills. There are about twentyfive megaliths of different sizes that are well over fifteen feet in length and four feet in circumference which may not have been placed upright, so squarish megaliths three feet above the ground. On the road from Tandwa to Simaria there are two major megalithic sites at Sisai and Urda. There are more memorial stones scattered all around the region, the dense forests however makes the sites inaccessible.

## **Megalithic Geometrical Formations on the Ground**

As Mr. Bulu Imam would put it, “... then perhaps megaliths were not important, the designs they wished to make on the earth through these stones is likely to be more important...” could very well become the real philosophy of megalithic erecting all around the globe.

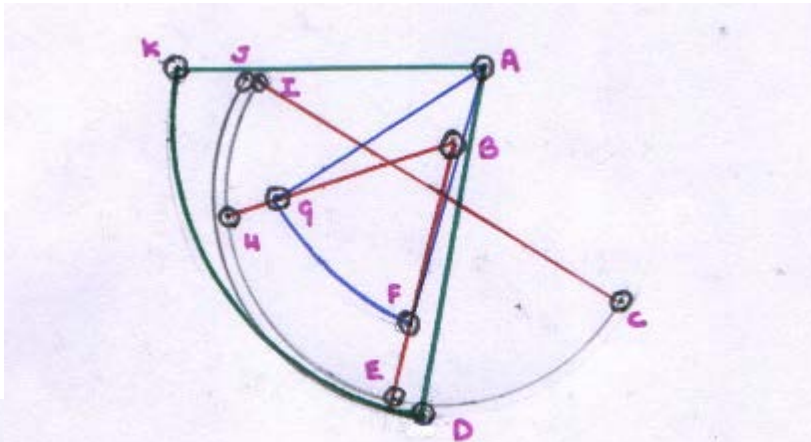
Once the megaliths in the form of dolmens, menhirs, pointer stones, alignment stones, stone circles, and cromlechs Etc. are put on a map, complicated geometrical configurations emerge in the form of circles, concentric circles, triangles, rhombus, trapeziums, and many other geometrical forms. Such magnanimous mathematical knowledge is not expected among the ancients, but they had it. The diagrams are self-explanatory, which is not a local affair confining itself to Hazaribagh only, but alignments go several hundred kilometers away, and perhaps even several thousand kilometers, as will be shown in the diagrams. The interpretations are varied. Bulu Imam being the eternal artist as he is, regards the concentric circles as a part of the tribal lotus. Dr. B.N. Mishra, the mathematician, considers this to be menstruation, by the process of which an area of the land is measured. All this is related to astronomy, and thereafter to astrology, spiritualism, numerology, and even the study of *Vaastu-shastra*, perhaps.

Michel Sabatier hails from La Rochelle near Carnac in France, which is in fact a haven for megaliths, and is quite a knowledgeable person as far as megaliths are concerned. Seeing the megaliths in Hazaribagh, particularly the Pankri Barwadi stone circle, the Bodhayana-Shila, and the Silver Hill Cairn Circle, he was stunned as he had never seen anything like this before. After seeing the megaliths taking the geometrical shapes and formations on paper, he had commented “that it is perhaps the stars and their constellations the megalith-makers tried to copy. All these hypotheses are important because all of these inferences seem right from their respective viewpoints.

## An example of Megalithic Geometry in British Isles

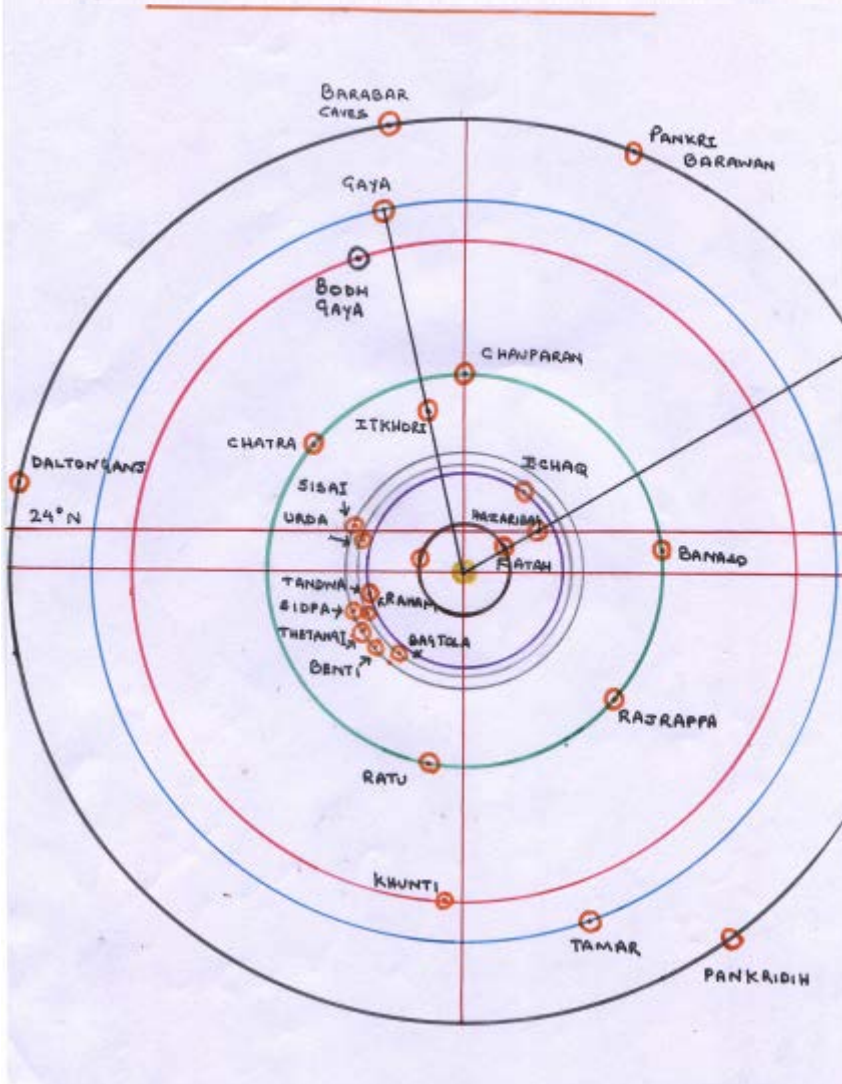
It has been found in a survey of the megalithic sites of the British Isles that similar linear and circular alignments of megalith have been found as in the Jharkhand area. Proposed in the part study for purpose of brevity: only one of the megalithic site map of England is shown.

(A portion of Abedeenshire's megalithic map)



Glossary-

- A: Balquain
- B: East Aquhorthies
- C: Tyrebagger
- D: Sunhoney
- E: Midmar Kirk
- F: Balgorkar
- G: Cothiemoor Wood
- H: Old Keig
- I: Dunny Deer
- J: Stonehead
- K: Ardlair



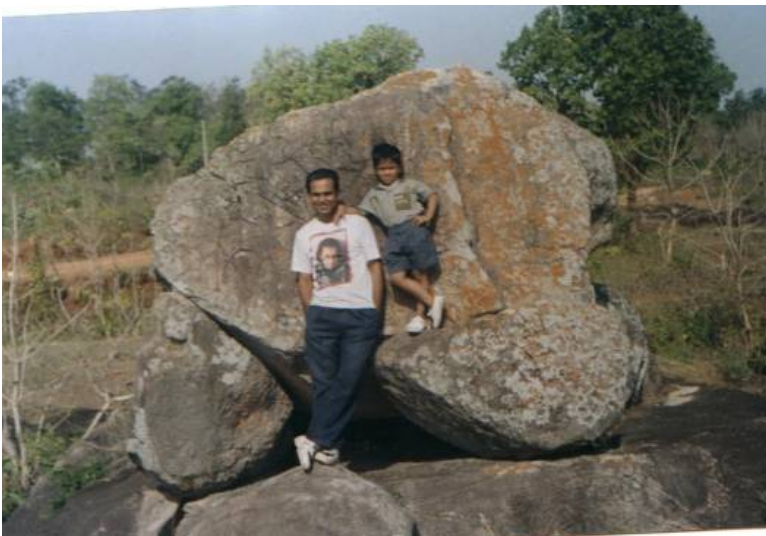
Megalithic geometry of  
Hazaribagh  
*(Centre at Pankuri Barwadi  
Megaliths see p.39)*

## Megaliths in Danger

Megaliths seem to be a more recent phenomenon. Earlier, wooden posts, stumps, or logs were used as burial markers, or for astronomical studies. Asko Parpola in his book *Deciphering the Indus Script* (Cambridge University Press, 1994 and 1999) states that in the Indus Valley Civilization they used the wooden pillar as the Shiva Linga, which later on was burned down after the ritual was over. This burning of the wooden lingas could very well be the *Jyotir-linga* among the modern-day Hindus, says Parpola. He further states that the sacrificial pillars, during the Vedic times also made of wood, were also burned down after the sacrifice. For direction orientation, in *Katyayana Sulbha-sutra* it has been advised to use wooden pegs. Julian Cope, in his book *The Modern Antiquarian* (Thorsons, An Imprint of Harper Collins Publishers, 1998) suggests that there are evidences that the Callanish megaliths in Scotland were previously made out of wood, which later on went on to be replaced by stones.

This wooden post worshipping in Hazaribagh known as the *Khuta Baba* or *Qumran Baba* is possibly the reminiscence of a cult which surely was pre-megalithic. This *khuta* worship is a living tradition in most of the villages in Hazaribagh. In the pre-historic Neolithic times, wood got replaced with stones for the obvious reason that stones were longer lasting than wood. But now megaliths are ignored due to lack of knowledge among the common people. The stone quarries which have mushroomed everywhere are feeding the unquenchable hunger for stone chips used in building of houses, roads, etc. for the ever increasing population and in the process destroying numerous megalithic sites situated in and around the hills where the quarrying is being done. The villagers carry the menhirs from the megalithic sites and place them on the floor near the wells to wash clothes and dishes, these slabs of stones are also used as a bridge over the drains. A general awareness programme is required to be brought up to train and tell the people regarding megaliths as it is a heritage of their area, country, and the worlds., which is required to be preserved.”

Subhasis Das



*Subhasis Das and Bumpy  
with the Canary Hill  
Dolmen*



## Buddhist Sites of Hazaribagh

The Buddhist sites of Hazaribagh range from an antiquity as early as 300 BC, as in the case of Marwateri in Sitagarha, where Painted Grey Ware (PGW) pottery has been found, to the comparatively recent find of a 9<sup>th</sup> century Sarasvati of the Pala-Sena period in Hazaribagh. Below a brief list of sites is given of Buddhist Sites in Hazaribagh

### Background

The Prakrit place-names found in Hazaribagh are evidence of Buddhist influence since very early times. For this alone it would be significant. Hazaribagh came under the northwestern Pala-Sena empire at its border with Magadha and the village of Bodhgaya then known as Senani in the Lord's time. Prakrit place-names have been found in the northwest part of Hazaribagh adjoining Gaya such as Itkhouri which is claimed to be the place where the Lord parted from his mother (*itkhooi*). Today, this is a major site for Buddhist relics. Not far from this place on the Grand Trunk Road is Chauparan. Here it is said a welcome was arranged for the Lord (*Chhau-paran*). He proceeded to Chatra where a great umbrella (*chhatri*) was erected for him. Many of the villages in Hazaribagh have been found to have significant place-names in Prakrit, such as *Mandair*, *Ichak*, *Sindur*, *Nagwa*, etc. and recent research by Subhasis Das has linked the goddess of fertility Urvar of Britain with the ancient place-names of the Jharkhand region, as well as Ur in Mesopotamia, pointing to earliest culture contacts and migrations. The connectivity between Hazaribagh and Bodhgaya is like this. The pilgrim route came up the Mohaniya river via Sainani to Bhalwa, crossing the great arterial highway, the Grand Trunk Road, at Bhalwa. This highway existed in Buddha's time and was the major trade and caravan route between north India and China. This highway across India connected the northern route of the Silk Road to China with the southern Silk Road and it was used by Xuanzang, the Chinese pilgrim. Today it is the Asian Highway. The pilgrim route went up the Mohaniya river to Kolhua and Itkhouri, thence to Chatra. Another route went from Bhalwa up the ghats to Chauparan and thence to Itkhouri, from where it followed the Mohaniya river all the way to Dato and thence via Katkumsandi to Harhad. This route came to Ichak via Mandair and thence via Hazaribagh and Sitagarha to Midnapore along the Damodar river, from where it debouched in the Bay of Bengal at Tamruk (*Tamralipti*). Many images in stone of the Buddhist goddess Saraswati have been found in Hazaribagh and these are described in some detail. Also, Hazaribagh has shown a proclivity for presenting a seated form of Shiva-Parvati with bull and lion *vimana* which may be said to be peculiar to the region also and is described. There is ample evidence that Sakyamuni Gautama had been to Hazaribagh and the adjacent areas. Perhaps the most important proof is the number of ancient Buddhist sites in the region. The great Buddhist scholar Sir Edwin Arnold had held the Buddha came to Hazaribagh, which he had termed as the "Thousand Gardens". In his epic on the life of Buddha, *The Light of Asia*, (1926), in Book the Sixth, he wrote,

*"Thou who wouldst see where dawned the light at last,  
North-westwards from the "Thousand Gardens" go  
By Gunga's valley till thy steps be set  
On the green hills where those twin streamlets spring,  
Nilajan\* and Mohana\*; follow them,  
Winding beneath broad-leaved mahua trees,  
Mid thickets of the sansar\* and the bir\*,  
Till on the plain the shining sisters meet*

*In Phalgu's bed, flowing by rocky banks  
To Gaya and the red Barabar hills.”  
(note: Nilajan = Lirlajan; Mohana= Mohaniya;  
sansar= Saonsar; bir= Birhor )*

If Hazaribagh is the source of the Lord's journey of realization it has really to be seen in a deeper perspective than hitherto relegated to it. This idyllic sylvan setting is covered with evidence of the Lotus Feet, its course via Itkhouri to Gaya. This will be in accordance with my description of the pilgrim route described above which has been checked with the earliest records.

### **Sitagarha**

Sitagarha monastery and vihara remains on the east side of the Sitagarha hill, which the Border Security Force has relentlessly been bombing as a mortar range despite protests. The finding of Painted Grey Ware (PGW) pottery at Sitagarha has firmly placed it as a site that came up shortly after the Buddha, perhaps in Asoka's time because the cut-off for PGW is 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century BC. Marwateri is in the eastern basin of the Sitagarha hill some eight kilometers east of the Hazaribagh town on the ancient pilgrim route to Midnapore. Here were found several relics.(i) A votive stupa in red sandstone about three feet in height which shows the Lord in four different mudras of meditation and blessing,(ii) black basalt apsara torso from the Harshvardhana period of 6<sup>th</sup> Cent. AD,(iii) a column bearing yakshi figures,(iv) a fragment of half lifesize statue of the Lord,(v) a Mahadeva statue of four feet height, (vi)iron implements ,(vi) stone freizes and columns have been found. An eight petaled astadala lotus representing the virgin goddess was dug up by me in Marwateri and has now become the monogram of the Vinoba Bhawe University, Hazaribagh. The monogram was drawn for the University from the original by Hazaribagh artist Ujjal Ghosh, earlier an art student of mine.

The site has been well surveyed by various archaeological departments including teams from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and Bihar Archaeology Department (BAD), but despite its potential, excavation by any of the government departments was never attempted. Remains of a vihara, stupa, and village with iron smelting site alongside in a sarna or sacred grove which yielded PGW fragments, are confirmed. It seems that the several tanks and wells and villages in the region were once part of a comprehensive Vihara here on the pilgrim route to Midnapore.

Now I will give a brief note on the statues of goddess Saraswati of importance found by me in Hazaribagh. Saraswati is name of a mythic tributary of river Sutlej in Punjab. The name is a Mundaric tradition linked with the Saras bird always found wading in the rivers. Wherever the goddess is depicted it is in connection with speech or writing, and also the water-snake Manasa. Often she is shown playing the musical instrument vina and seated on the white stork or Saras. Thus this goddess is invariably associated with Mohania river where her image has been found at several places, including Dato and Itkhouri, and other places. I give a note on these sites below.







*Votive Stupa, Sitagarha*



*Torso, Sitagarha*



*Pankri Barwadi*



*Itkhori*

## **Saraswati Sites**

### **Dato**

A statue of standing figure Saraswati in blue-grey sandstone, holding lotus flower in her left hand bent upward from the elbow, was found by me in this village some three years ago along with other stuary fragments in a field near the National Park jungle. The standing figure, wearing a girdle, with sacred thread common to such statues of the period, wears the hair piled up in a chignon, with pearl tiara. Over the head is a rounded stone headpiece bearing Pala inscription. Height of the statue is 24 inches without headpiece. This statue is exactly like the one in the Nalanda Museum, and is considered one of the earliest Buddhist versions of the deity dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD. The right hand is lowered in varada mudra with nimbus, while her left hand holds upwards against her left shoulder a blossoming lotus with dangling stalk (*salki*). At the deity's lower right side is a flying female figure or vihara, on her lower left is a small image of god Vishnu in tribhanga attitude. Stylistically the head may be compared to a stone image of Vagisvari of 10<sup>th</sup> Cent. AD in the Varendra Museum, Rajshahi, Bangladesh.

### **Canary Hill**

A rare 9<sup>th</sup> century hard grey slate statue of about 4 inches height (fragment) of goddess Saraswati was discovered in mid 2000 by little Rashmi Priyanka Das (10 years) half kilometre to the west site of Canary Hill, already noted as an important Kushan period Buddhist site, as well as a major Megalithic and Neolithic site. Rashmi is daughter of talented Hazaribagh woodcarver of mother goddess statues, Shri Pascal Prabhu. Broken at the waist the statue would have been double the fragment height. It wears girdle and sacred thread, seated in lotus posture on a double petaled lotus supported from below by two viharas dated on the basis of the floral scroll engraving and other features between 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Cent. AD, Pala-Sena period and comparable with image of Saraswati discovered from Deopara, Rajshahi, and another similar statue found in the village of Vajrayogni near Dacca and now kept in the Dacca Museum. It bears resemblance also to a Manasa statue of the goddess with Linga and Ganga seated crosslegged on either side covered by seven-hooded snake, worshipped by the jungle tribals, and found from Kiching in Orissa and dated to 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Cent. AD. Seated on either side of the deity are the two cross-legged figures.

### **Sekha-Barasi**

At the village of Sekha we have several dozens of early Kushan period (first cent. AD) fragments of statuary from a Buddhist vihara or shrine including, (i) a five feet high three-quarter Bodhisattva Alokitesvara, with pillar on head, girdle, sacred thread (ii) statue of around four feet height of standing goddess Saraswati holding lotus with hanging stalk (*salki*) in bent left hand, right hand lowered in *varada – mudra* with halo. On her lower left is a small image of Vishnu in *tribhanga* attitude, and over right shoulder is relief stupa. Hair is piled on head in chignon. This statue may be stylistically similar to Pala-Sena figures of the same type in 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Cen. (iii) Shiva-Parvati stele about 24 inches height in seated posture, featuring bull and lion *vimanas*, common to Hazaribagh (**Frontispiece**) The image of the Bodhisattva along with a small stone Nandi (bull) is in the main portion of the Hindu

temple where it is worshipped as Shiva. The goddess Sarasvati is in a small old temple in the grounds. The other relics are exposed outside.

### **Itkhouri**

This is Hazaribagh's premier Buddhist site. The main temple containing the standing statue of goddess Sarasvati in black stone is under the Hindu control at present although the statue is distinctly of Buddhist origin, since Sarasvati was also worshipped by Buddhists, and was in fact originally a tribal goddess associated with the river-snake *Manasa* and still worshipped in this form in many places in Orissa. The goddess is holding a lotus upright in her left hand as in the other Sarasvati statues of Hazaribagh, and her right hand is in a *varada-mudra*. Height of the statue is over five feet. Next to it are many familiar icons of Hazaribagh Buddhist site statuary, including Shiva-Parvati in seated attitude with bull and lion *vimana*. The temple is located on right bank of the Mohaniya river. Nearby a museum houses some thousands of Buddhist statuary and stone artifacts. Behind the temple a stone circle was recently brought to light by Subhasis Das. The Itkhouri site falls on the major megalithic alignments. The site is not on the Buddhist Sites Heritage Route and I had taken this up as far back as 1993 with the U.S.Embassy at Delhi. After some initial interest it was dropped. Naturally, it is not meant to be shown as a Buddhist site.

### **Narsingasthan.**

Black stone image of Bodhisattva similar to that at Sekha noted above in the Hindu temple at this place. Above this statue of five feet height is a small lion head which is why it is worshipped as Narsing,(I.e. Narasimha) the lion-avatara of god Vishnu. Also, Shiv-Parvati seated with bull and lion *vimana*. Other stone objects include a megalith and linga. This site is on the megalithic alignment. Dated to between 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> Cent.

### **Nagwa**

Shiva-Parvati in seated posture with bull and lion *vimana* in a small Hindu temples. The village is also of interest for its small contemporary ancestor stones on which the name of each of the deceased is inscribed, similar to a Christian cemetery headstone. Recently brought to light by Subhashis Das.

### **Kharati.**

In a small temple at Kharati, better known perhaps for its Khovar painting, and alongside megaliths with mother goddess cupules used as hayricks we have a stone image of Shiva-Parvati in seated posture with bull and lion *vimanas*.

### **Bhalwa**

Shiva-Parvati statue 10" high in seated posture with bull and lion *vimana* typical of Hazaribagh. Other carvings, such as large size pink sandstone freize of elephant giving birth to calf.20"x36" . have been found.





*Statue of Saraswati, Dato*



*Goddess Saraswati, Dokatand*



*Saraswati, Sekha Barasi*



*Shiva-Parvati, Itkhori*

## **Other Sites**

This then gives us some outline of the sites of Buddhistic importance in the Hazaribagh area and their relationship with their identity in the Hindu temples of the region. There are other sites also

which I will like to mention under this category which are of interest to the researcher.

## **Ichak**

Mauryan coins have been found in Ichak. I had brought this to light in my book *Bridal Caves* (INTACH, 1995) Reports have been received from Ichak that some kilometers to the east of the village some Buddhist statuary was recently discovered while digging the foundation of a building at Lohri near Urka. It may be here mentioned that early metal jewellery of heavy type has been found in the company of Mughal period coins from Tandwa, Barkakana, and Singhani, and these sites are all of interest to the researcher.

## **Indrapuri**

The head of a deity resembling the female deity Tara of Buddhist origin is worshipped in a small temple opposite the Chhath Talao.

## **Burhwa Mahadev**

Supposed Buddhist. Worshipped as a major Hindu shrine.

## **Kolhua Pahar**

Hill near Itkhouri well known for Jain relics. Large amounts of statuary have been stolen from here with no protection from the authorities despite protests and full coverage by the media.

## **Mahadeva Hill**

The entire Mahadeva range is sacred to the memory of the Buddha since this is the Lord's earliest name ever since Buddhism had entered the region since early times, replacing Shivadharmā. The Burhwa-Mahadev stone temple at the eastern end of the hill just south of the town of Barkagaon is an ancient Buddhist site. Nearby are some rock-paintings or *kohvara*, and not far away is the pilgrim site of Barso-pani famous for its caves where water falls if you clap your hands.

## **Pankri Barwadi**

Remains of a Buddhist shrine, and stone relief panels of Bodhisatvas, and votive stupa with Buddha in four *mudras*. Located in a small grove on a rocky hillock.

## Sidpa

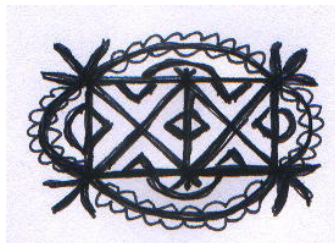
About a hundred large carved blocks of whitish sandstone were discovered here by me two years ago, and these are of interest as they represent the remains of a Mauryan period building of some extent, since in the remains alone several hundred stones of considerable size lie about, some with fine engravings on them. On one of the blocks is carved the image of a goddess sitting on the tail of a lion, and in an adjacent portion a woman churning butter. There is also a huge stone butter-churning wheel. Another freize depicts a horseman spearing a stag. Not far away from the site, in the Satpahar hills, is a rockart of importance. The location of the site in the middle of the Karanpura valley between Tandwa and Satpahar made it the victim of Mughal invasion of the region, which could account for the breaking of the relics.

## Data Sahab

The Data Sahab is a Mohammedan shrine associated with a saint. The tree is associated with his toothstick. The Data refers to the magical tree associated with the Buddha known also as the Munseri tree which bears plum-like fruits and sugary flowers. The Munseri tree is found here. The Munseri, also called Data, is the Pishoka of Xuanzang, the Chinese pilgrim who came to Bihar in the middle of the first millennium AD, and to Fahsien (A.D. 399-414) it was the Shaki or Shati. The British archaeologist Alexander Cunningham, who found it in Allahabad, called it Ayodhya and Saketa. It is reportedly also found at Sanchi and Ayodhya, and a tree survives at the Mangla-Gauri Hill north of the Bodhi Temple in Bodhgaya. All the examples of the tree are believed to have been toothsticks of the Buddha who after brushing his teeth with the branch stuck it in the ground. That is how it gets its name locally as Data, associated with Datawan, the colloquial name for the toothstick. (*Data* meaning tooth, and *wan* meaning forest). Sohrai art is also painted with the toothstick and many Buddhist sacred symbols appear in the Sohrai art of Bhelwara.

## Sohrai Art and Buddhism

The following auspicious Buddhist symbols are found in the Kurmi Sohrai village painting from the Bhelwara group of villages in eastern Hazaribagh, Flag, Umbrella, Lotus, Kite, Horse and Rider, Mirror, Bowl, Mangoe, Wheel, Conch, Vase, Wheel, Fish, Elephant, King and Queen, Saffron. It is of interest that the development of anthropomorphic plant-forms have been associated by me with the development of the *bhanga* or tripartite balance noted for the first time in India and developed in Greece, which appears in the frescoes of Ajanta, Bagh, Sigirya,. Uptil now anthropomorphic and zoomorphic forms or plants depicting Shiva, the mother goddess, etc., in typical trebhanga stances are called Mahadeva by the village women who paint the famous Khovar and Sohrai art of Hazaribagh.



## The Khovar and Sohrai art of Hazaribagh

I have already dealt with the village art and its connection with Hazaribagh's great treasure, its prehistoric rockart. There is a stylistic difference between the comb-cut art and the painted art. Both are done during the two principal seasons when the villages are painted, which is during the harvest festival of Sohrai during October, and the marriage season of Khovar from February to June. It is strictly a woman's artform, although sometimes men practice it. The art which I called *Khovar*, and which name has since stuck to it internationally, is the comb cutting art. In this art a white coating of natural liquefied kaolin is spread over a dark ground and cut with a piece of broken comb, when its underground appears. This is also known in art as *sgraffito* and was practiced as an artform in ancient Greece in pottery designing in around the middle of the first millennium BC. When the marriages take place the villages in which these marriages occur are decorated with comb art using the sacred mandala designs, and other sacred decorative and fertility symbols found in the prehistoric rock-painted *kohvaras* of Hazaribagh. The word *Kohvar* or *Khovar* as I have pointed out, comes from the two words *Kho* in Kolarian meaning a cave, and *var* meaning bride couple and has been associated in tribes with painted caves in which the first marriages used to take place. Across the Kaimur ranges famous rock-art caves are called locally *Kohvar* or *Khovar*. This tradition has led to the painted marriage rooms of Hazaribagh. The tradition seems to have traveled northward to Madhubani and resulted in the Mithila painted *Kohbar*, now brought to paper and a recognized art-form like Hazaribagh *Khovar* and *Sohrae* which I brought to paper in 1993. In 1997 the Hazaribagh Chapter of INTACH under my guidance and with the supervision of my eldest son Justin, made the Bihar Tableau for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence Republic Day Parade in New Delhi which received a bronze shield award from the President of India. It depicted the three sections (1) the palaeolithic art being painted by cave-men (2) the village art of Hazaribagh tribal women (3) the Mithila *Kohbar* being painted by women on houses. Thus we had established the evolution of tribal art from earliest times to the present and the indignity of the tribal societies who continued the artistic tradition.

The painted art is done generally during harvest-time with chewed sticks called *kuchi* or *datwan*, or a piece of rag. The use of red, black or white pigments dissolved with water is applied with these. This is the classic rockart technique also. The comb art I have called *Khovar* and the painted art *Sohrai*. The comb art is practiced during the harvest season, small white stampings with rice flour and milk gruel are splashed on or stamped on the black comb-cut designs using either a *jhanjhra* or stamper of some type. The Bhelwara group of villages famed for the Sohrai painting are Kurmi tribals. Ganju tribals in the southern part of the Hazaribagh plateau around Saheda also practice a vibrant painted art during both the marriage and harvest, while excellent examples of comb cutting may also be seen. Their principal artforms are wild birds and animals. In Bhelwara the art of the Kurmis features bulls with the figure of Pashupati on the back, which is reminiscent of the painted pottery from Susa in Iran around 5000-4000 BC. The Bhelwara art is a classic example of continuity of a high artform finding links with West Asia since earliest times. It also has much in common with the harvest art of the Coptic tribes along the Upper Nile in Egypt.





*Putli Ganju doing comb cut  
Khorar painting*



*Ganju Tribal wall painting  
of Hazaribagh*



*The painted Sohrai  
of Bhelwara*

During March 2000 the Djamu Gallery of the Australian Museum in Sydney, Australia, organized under the direction of John Kirkman, the gallery's Director, a major mural painting project in which four tribal women artists of our Tribal Womens Artists Cooperative, created huge six feet by twelve feet murals on board using natural earth ochres. Jason worked on sculptured Sohrai forms cut out of plywood with a fretsaw. Yvonne-June also participated showing how she learned her mother Philomena's Oraon art traditions. Other artists included Putli Ganju, Chamni Ganju, Rukmani Devi Prajapati. I led the team. Alongside the mural painting attended by thousands of visitors in centrally located Customs House at Circular Quay, Sydney, an exhibition of Khovar and Sohrai artworks on paper was presented. The exhibition ran three months and was attended by over fifty thousand visitors, and was an outstanding success gaining wide media coverage.



*Rukmani Devi with her "Tree of Life with Mandala," 6'x12', Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane*



*Putli Ganju's "Hunting Scene", 6'x12', Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney*



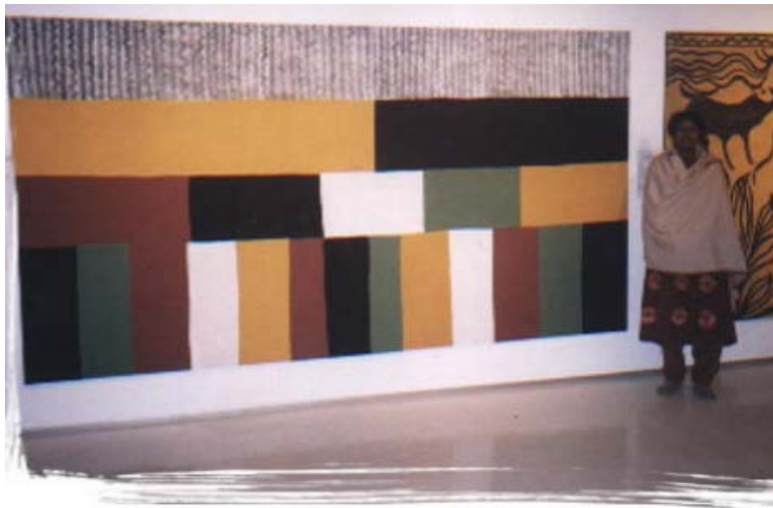
*Chamni Ganju's "Peacocks", in the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane*





Artworks produced including two quilted ledras, found places in prestigious museum collections in Australia. Elizabeth and Philomena's quilts were acquired by the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney for its textile gallery. Earlier, in 1997, quilts made by them had gone to queensland art gallery, Brisbane.

*Philomena's ledra "Peacocks" (top), Elizabeth's ledra "Birds" (lower), Powerhouse Museum, Sydney*



*Philomena Tirkey, "Totem", Casula Arts Centre, Casula, Sydney*

The Khovar or comb art, is again easily divided into several local schools. There is the precise, flowery cutting of the Prajapatis or potters, whose linear designs have been compared by me with the delicate Lapita pottery of Papua New Guinea and New Caledonia in the Pacific which probably came about with early Indian connections via the sea route when maize went to South America from India. Bhaduli Pipradih has wonderful Prajapati art and the letters of the Indus script found in the rockart of Isco have also been found in the wall painting of the village women here. This art is a potter's art basically. Kharati is a Prajapati village. A local practitioner of the art is Rukmani Devi Prajapati, who was one of the artists who represented India in Sydney during March 2000 to create Jharkhand's tribal art at the Djamu Gallery. Her six feet by twelve feet mural *Tree of Life* is in the collection of the Australian Museum and another *Tree of Life with Mandala* is in the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane. This art is delicate and flowery, using mainly floral motifs in which the god Shiva appears in flowery anthropomorphic forms. Early examples of pottery from the Ganges valley (Jaimanglagarh) have yielded similar samples of comb-cut pottery designs as found in the Prajapati Khovar of Hazaribagh and which is so similar to the comb-cut pottery of Papua New Guinea. In the North Karanpura valley you will find fine Prajapati art in Bhaduli Pipradi and Kharati, heavy Rana art in nearby Napo, an in Barhmaniya we find the thick black comb cutting of the Telis who are oil extractors by

profession. By the time you have reached Isco the art has given way to a gentle tracery of mud cut with the fingers in soft muted browns and greys, and this is the legendary Munda comb art connected with the prehistoric rockart panels in the grey sandstone shelter above the village which has now become world famous. The Munda art is most easily comparable with the protoaustraloid art of the Aborigines in the Central Australian Desert, spotting and all, and in it you will find the Rainbow Snake which the Mundas call Lorbung and the Aborigines of Australia call Borlung.

As we climb the steep scarp up to the Hazaribagh plateau from Isco we are rising through a literal ascent of man, since these are the ancient prehistoric palaeoarchaeological levels I have spoken of elsewhere. At the top, we are among pleasant jungles, in which is the village of Saheda in which I first found Putli Ganju's extraordinary animal and bird paintings on the walls of her house in 1992. In the Djamu Gallery in April this year she painted a *Hunting Scene* on a six feet by twelve feet board which today hangs in Australia's most prestigious art gallery --- the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Her mural combcutting of *Jungle Animals* was placed in the Australian Museum. Her cousin Chamni is also today a world famous artist. Her mural painting *Peacocks* is now in the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane. From Saheda village, as we proceed along the rutted road by a watercourse atop a ridge that divides on the North Karanpura side to the west the Isco *nala* and to the east the Dudhi *nala* we pass into another rich, rare arena of jungle art for we are in Chapri. This village was established by me as far back as 1992 as an Early Man site, and in the Dudhi *nala* rising nearby we find man's earliest artifacts. Equally Chapri is famous as being the site where Chibbha, the fabled Bird-man, of the tribals is found, and during 1992 some members of our party saw this fabled creature which stands upright like a man, jumps from branch to branch and down onto the ground, since it has armlike wings and cannot fly ! It is also painted by the tribal Kurmi womenfolk of Jorakath, notably Bandhni Devi, and like the double headed bird it is a unique feature of their art.

The art of the Kurmis of Chapri and Jorakath is famous, and perhaps the most powerful in animal form yet discovered. Between Chapri and Jorakath we pass the old fort, and a beautiful lake, and enter Jorakath village. Every wall is covered with dark animal forms conceived in prehistoric times. It is of note that elephants, tigers, and peacocks found in their art are also to be found in the forests surrounding their village, a vast wildlife corridor today threatened by the opencast coal mining by the North Karanpura Coalfields Project which is threatening the entire valley. The bull with feeding trough and elephant with feeding troughs identical with the same icon in the Indus Valley seals. Six kilometres north of the rockart of Isco, time stops. This is a village of Hill Kurmis. They have not been ethnically separated from the Kurmis who joined the Kshatriyas whom I drew attention to earlier. Their art is unique in the entire range of Khovar art. Now that a proper PhD thesis is being undertaken by Neelima Prasad of Banaras Hindu University with my guidance I hope that these differences and individual identity of the people and their art can be looked into and fixed from the academic perspective – whatever that may mean. Similarly, two great schools of art lie in the Turis and Birhors. The Turis, who are basket makers, have a delicate floral line. The Birhors as I have pointed out have a tradition of sand painting, or drawing with the forefinger in the sand. Another artform is that of the Bhuiyas, which is a form of finger-painting, using the broad curving arcs of the Basera, or symbol of the house, comparable to the Mesopotamian hieroglyph of the same significance. The Basera design is made by the fingers sweeping the soft clay of the wall into a curving

pattern resembling bamboos. It is the ritual design put on the top of the khovar painting panels of the walls, and the Bhuiyas and sometimes Prajapatis use this as an all-over pattern. Basera means goddess of the bamboo grove ( Bas: bamboo, Era: goddess). The Basera pattern is also used on entire house walls by the Oraons. This great tribe has an ancient art of its own, which is the Khuta, or Totem. Vertical and horizontal bands in red, black, white, or other colours, which creates the four generations of tribal memory to an Ancestor. This art was only recently brought to light at Djamu Gallery, Sydney when Philomena Tirkey's huge mural *Totem* drew attention to this great artform. The painting now hangs in the Casula Arts Centre, Casula, Sydney. This Oraon art was roughly treated when missionary activity and mission schools with their art classes nurturing the rosy pictures of textbooks killed the ancient artforms, which would have borne the earliest visual records with Harappa --- since the Oraons, according to Asko Parpola – are the original Brahui speakers of the Harrappan Civilization whose local dialect is called Kurrukh. Fortunately, the Totem art of the Oraons has survived in Philomena Tirkey's work. But we must not be light with the existing artistic genius latent in Oraon culture, which our work with modern Oraon women artists has shown. Exceedingly original, powerful, and original work is appearing, about which I will speak in my words on the Tribal Womens Artists Cooperative project. The final word I will reserve for the Ghatwal art of the Potmo region on the south bank of the Konar river, and firmly within the enchanting landscape of its forested watershed. The Ghatwals were the guards of the passes into the plateaus kept by the rajas. Their art has a tendency to be glyptic with black and red overtones, highly stylized and yet at times expressing a lyrical quality as light as Oraon floral motifs. I have not developed it yet as an artform on paper. The Bhuiya tribe has a simple finger-painting motif of series of arcs which is called the *basera*. This design is fundamental to Mesopotamian patterns as well as being a common Brahmi picto-script. It appears as the mountain, and was extensively used by the emperor Asoka on his coins. In triadic form three arcs represent the mountain. The Bhuiyas also employ another familiar West Asian motif called the *basera* referring to the goddess who protects the house which is a series of squared lines in internal recession, similar to the Archaic Sumerian or Old Babylonian cuneiform symbolizing "house". From these it may be seen that these ancient motifs had inter-relationships with other cultures far away which could have been the result of migrations. Since the Basera motif also is found in the Mesolithic rockart of Hazaribagh it is held by me that our Damodar Valley region was the earliest source of these motifs. Thus common Celtic and Babylonian motifs have to be traced to the prehistoric and protohistoric art of the Damodar Valley.

The Ghatwals are a tribe who were traditionally employed by the rajas to guard the passes. Their art is geometrical and angular and can be viewed in the villages surrounding the Konar river catchment. The Santals of Hazaribagh have a very minimal art and some blackened walls and a few floral or bird motifs may be found during their marriages, generally painted by the bridegroom. The Manjhi Santals of Jarwadi use a strong red earth for plastering their walls and parrots and large-petaled flowers are sometimes found drawn in courtyard alongside elaborately carved doors. A word requires to be said in passing on the doors of Kurmi and Santal homes. The Kurmis and Santals as I have perhaps earlier pointed out have close affinities. In these homes we find very powerful carving on the panels and frames of the doors, and a separate study of this is being initiated by me, starting in the Kurmi village of Bhelwara.

The Turis are a basket-making tribe whose settlements in the Ramgarh region have been badly affected by the development of coal mines. Their art is very simple and elemental, and although child-like is not one bit childish, and is witness of a very early expression of the naive tradition in folk art in Hazaribagh which is a subject of perhaps further deeper study. The most powerful geometric forms appear in Oraon Totem poles as an artform as I have drawn attention to, whilst alongside this after missionary intervention all that remains in the homes of these tribes is a floral art of strictly classroom dimensions, not hearkening to any primeval origins. The Birhors of Hazaribagh are the most primitive autochthonous group perhaps in the whole of India, and since they live in leaf houses they do not have walls to draw or paint on. In government housing charcoal drawing appeared on the drab house walls some time back noted in my book *Bridal Caves*. The Birhors practice a sand drawing which they use for expressing themselves. I have seen a similar tendency among the Koeri farming community who live in remoter areas.

Little now remains to be told of the existing information on the tribal art of Hazaribagh apart from research observation, which is naturally vast, and would be odious in the present volume. The Manjhi Santals of Hazaribagh have evidenced a naïve flowery style like the Oraons, and some excellent animal drawing. The major periods at which this art surfaces are during marriages, when the bridegroom paints a parrot or flower in the courtyard of his house. Again it appears in February during the *Goar-porob* or cattle festival of the Manjhis much in the tradition of the Sohrai, and yet similar in many ways perhaps to the Khond festival of the *Porho-jatra* in the Phulbani district of Orissa, in which a buffalo is brutally sacrificed and recalls the days of early human sacrifice or *Meria-puja*. Similar to this is the Bihu Porob of the *Bodos*, an Ahom tribe of Assam, who practice at this same time a festival which involves ritual bathing of cattle. Santal painting could perhaps be developed into a more forceful *genre*.

The destruction of priceless works of art such as old temples or magnificent ancient buildings would not be tolerated by public opinion, but it is perhaps curious that in India of all places with permission of public will, where culture and religion are supposedly sacrosanct, the entire evidence of a peoples's cultural heritage can be irretrievably destroyed, even without documentation... The village house wall painting of Hazaribagh, brought to light by me eight years ago, internationally famous as Khovar and Sohrai, was a threatened ritual tradition of this kind. The Khovar marriage art and the Sohrai harvest art, both deeply matriarchal ritual and iconic traditions, are today openly destroyed through mining, dams, and industrial development in the name of progress. Cement buildings on which the art cannot be made since it requires the absorbent mud walls of the traditional houses, replace them. The cement constructions have social sanction in an increasingly patriarchal society, and is linked with the demeaning of the traditional matriarchal tradition strongly opposed by Brahminism. Both Khovar and Sohrai are ancient matriarchal traditions of feminine power and authority in the village. In contrast, cement buildings are built by men, in the making and decoration of which women no longer play their traditional role of clay carrier, clay plasterer, house painter and decorator, keeper of ageold --- even palaeolithic --- religious icons as old as the awakening of the first spiritual consciousness in our race. Men in a village, especially in the advent of Brahminization which accompanies mechanization and industry, over-rule the matriarchal village society which is deeply threatened, and the erosion of feminine authority rests lightly with the official decision makers and planners who live in far-off cities, do not know the ground realities, and I do

not hesitate to say are biased against the tribal authority in matters that affect them directly. Erosion of tribal authority is symonomous with erosion of matriarchal village authority in India. It paves the way to exploitation of resources by silencing the rural village will. The village artforms of Khovar and Sohrai openly maintain a millennia-old tradition as I have shown, an ancient ritual religio-cultural and sacred art tradition, which the married women hold to the exclusion of the Bhagat, Naiyya, Pahan, Brahmin or Christian priest. The icons are linked to a pre-Brahminical (and naturally pre-Christian) sacred iconography of great depth and beauty, to the study of which I have given the remaining portion of my life, which, is linked inturn as I have shown with the prehistoric rockart of the region. The antiquity of the iconography touching palaeolithic levels even, and the wideness of its demography from the Central Asian to the South American ranges covers the most fascinating slice of artistic prehistory in the existing world. These connections are provable even as the archaeological beds are demonstratable, undercutting the Sumerian origin of the wheeled horse by several thousand years perhaps... This is incredible, to say the least. The earliest wheeled animal in the world is from right central panel at Isco in the eastern North Karanpura Valley, and it is not a horse, but a spotted deer (*Axis axis*)! The cement houses pay a symbolic tribute to traditional Khovar and Sohrai icons by incorporating some of the prominent designs into their facades, where they are made by male masons. It is an acknowledgement of the need for the protection of the mother goddess. Thus while retaining the goddess as protector, the matriarchal tradition is destroyed completely, and the village Devis, or married women, are stripped of all spiritual authority in the realm of the sacred. This then, is the new order. Economic development is a patriarchal phenomenon, just as the ploughshare was seven thousand years before. It serves the needs of a male dominating society in which women are at best useful or productive. The role of woman as spiritually supreme in a subsistence society is sought to be done away with, along with their powerful ritual artforms of Khovar and Sohrai in Hazaribagh.



*Sohrai ledra*





Kuntal Devi., Jorakath  
KHOVAR



Harappa (H-6)



Mohenjo-daro (M-172)

INDUS SEALS



*An, buffalo-horned god of the Indus people, supposed to be a heavenly deity; Impression of a seal from Mohenjo-Daro, Mound of the Dead. He is surrounded by the six animals representing the six Senses, elephant , tiger, buffalo, and rhinoceros, two ibexes are under the seat.*

## Tribal Womens Art Project

In 1992 Dr. Erwin Neumayer and myself were returning from the North Karanpura valley by train. We were accompanied by my sons Justin and Jason. We were all eating *chinabadam*, the ubiquitous groundnut, also known to the intelligentsia of India as *timepass*, because it helps to pass the time – a national pastime. Erwin and I were in deep discussion about a serious possibility – bringing the village art to paper. A year later his formula, suggested at the University of Vienna, came in the post. One morning, in the middle of a shave, I was summoned by Justin and Jason to a mud-lathered scraperboard, given a comb in place of the safety razor which I had just laid down, and told to, well... shave mud. Some several thousand paintings later, I'm still doing it. Only, the shaving's not mine, but the work of the talented tribal women of Hazaribagh.

Manganese black is dissolved overnight in office glue and tap water (or well water, or stream water, polluted or unpolluted). It is thereafter spread by hand, cloth, or brush, over a surface, which is generally handmade high rag content watercolour art paper, and then allowed to dry in a cool place. After this a similar mixture of kaolin white or yellow ochre is applied over it in the same process, and then with a broken comb (or a finely tooled, special, quarter-inch bit of bamboo comb), a design is cut, quickly, sharply, taking in the ends swiftly, as in the case of a bird's beak, or a feather tip end. Sharp snouted snake headed plant limbs, arching trellises with curved lotus petals, and equally curved fishes, float up in *sgraffito* from the dark undercoat, bringing to light a new mono-tone. Yellow ochre of various shades is used depending upon the locality where the art occurs. In Isco a beautiful lavender earth colour is found, in Kharati brilliant white, in Jorakath a beautiful natural earth colour. It has the two-dimensional folk magic with the primitive simplicity which has been lost by overworking such artforms as Madhubani, Kalighat-patas and the pata paintings of coastal Orissa, though I do not doubt excellent naive examples will still be found of these great artforms in isolated pockets where they can spring again unadorned by the modern schooling of traditional village artists which is the great danger of all traditional or great folk forms.

Recently archaeology has brought to light the decorated pottery of the Ahars dated 4000 BC in Balathal –Bhilwara on the Banas river, near modern Udaipur in the eastern Aravallis, which is of the Khovar “sgraffito” technique! This technique, referred to as “reversed slip” by experts, was seen in only a few shards of the Harappan sites of Mohenjodaro and Surkotada dated around 2400 BC and seems to be more ancient and their prototype. This technique, similar to Khovar is a potter's art-form, and consists of putting a second slip over the lower one and cutting design in bands to reveal the decorative motifs in wavy and straight lines, criss-cross patterns, and a twin colour similar to Khovar art in Hazaribagh. Since the motifs of Khovar “reversed slip” may be traced back to six and more thousand years old rock paintings it is certain that it precedes the Balathal art. This suggests a westward migration of the art form from Hazaribagh!

The Sohrai art of Hazaribagh for me is the grand painted *ghodas* and animal wheels, the intertwining anthropomorphic floral Shivas, the almost unbelievable creative originality of leafy forms, painted in Bhelwara during the Sohrai festival. The *ghodas* or painted horses of Sohrai art evoke Central Asian rockart influence from the Bronze Age petroglyphs of Kazakhstan, illustrated here from Tamgaly-III. Yet we find its similarity with the wheeled

spotted animal of the Isco rockart which is older. It is as creative as the Khovar art and evokes a highly individual charm different in many ways to the marriage art with its fertility symbols taken by Buddhism as auspicious ritual symbols. Fresh and highly spontaneous in its original outline made with a nail, something the Ganju artists sometimes use in making the first line of a stupendous animal form. A long trailing line later gone over with in a more studied if not less whimsical line. In the Kurmi art of Sohrai in Bhelwara village a running red line, is later outlined with a running white line, or sometimes a black line is outlined with a red and then a white line. Vast whimsy at its natural best is the irrepressible quality of Sohrai art. The huge glyptic spaces made with black and red ochre on the floors is sometimes echoed in red and white glyptic geometrical designs on the walls.

The project to create comb-cut works of art on paper using natural earth ochres was sponsored in 1993-94 by the Australian High Commission, New Delhi in a direct aid project (DAP) grant made by Dr. Mark Thomson, then First Secretary. He gave a second grant for the setting up of the Sohrai art project in 1994-95. After a visit by Anthony Bourke the famous curator of Aboriginal art. The first exhibition of the art was Putli Ganju's Sohrai paintings arranged in 1995 at the Hogarth Gallery, Paddington in Sydney. Thereafter a series of exhibitions were held which are detailed in the Annexure tables, in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, Etc. Exhibitions have reached other parts of the world and a cyber gallery is being developed by Michel Sabatier in Paris. In May-June 2000 the Rebecca Hossack Gallery showed both paintings and ledras in London. The Tribal Womens Artists Cooperative was the outcome of a series of exhibitions arranged from 1996-97 by John Kirkman, then Director of the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Casula, Sydney.

The reason for the founding of the cooperative was 1. To highlight illegal opencast coal mining and destruction of forests vital to the tribals as well as tigers and elephants using them as corridors, 2. For highlighting the prehistoric rockart of the region which is a continuing tradition in the art of the tribal people of the North Karanpura valley threatened since 1987 by the opencast coal mining by the Central Coalfields Limited through the North Karanpura Coalfields Project which will destroy 1800 sq. kilometers of forest and tribal lands and displace 203 tribal villages, and 3. To bring to the tribal women of the region a sense of strength in their identity, and as a means of economic support in facing both official harassment in face of the mining project destabilizing their lives and the traditional contempt for these women in Indian society at large. All moneys received through sale of artworks are divided into three accounts, A. The Sanskriti Welfare Fund for tribal women, B. The Sanskriti Employment Fund through which a third of all earnings goes directly to the artist, and C. Sanskriti Centre Maintenance fund.




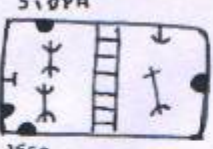


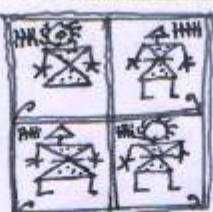
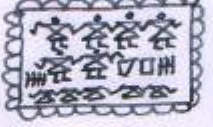




























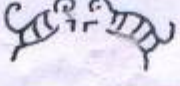
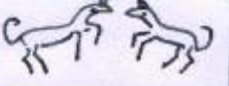
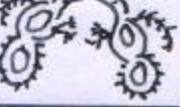
STYLISTIC MODES OF KHOVAR AND SOHRAI ART

| Stylistic Mode   | Motifs   | Paint Khovar | Comb Khovar | S.C. or Scheduled Tribe | Paint Sohrai | Comb Sohrai | Village                         |
|------------------|--|--------------|-------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Filigree         | Mother Goddess Shiva, Floral, Anthropomorphs           | *            | *           | Prajapati (Potter)      |              | *           | Kharati, Bhaduli Pipradih, Napo |
| Heavy            | Floral, Animal   | *            |             | Rana (Carpenter)        |              | *           | Kharati, Punkuri Barwadih       |
| Heavy            | Floral   |              | *           | Teli (Oil Extractor)    |              | *           | Barhmaniya                      |
| Sgraffito        | Snake, Anthropomorph                                   |              | *           | Munda                   |              | *           | Isco                            |
| Strong, Delicate | Floral   | *            |             | Oraon                   | *            |             | Dato                            |
| Heavy, Geometric | Pashupati on Bull/Ghoda, Anthropomorph                 |              |             | Ghatwal                 | *            |             | Potmo                           |
| Powerful Realism | Birds, Animals   |              | *           | Kurmi                   |              | *           | Jorakath, Chapri                |
| Anthropomorph    | Pashupati on Bull/Ghoda, Birds, Animals, Anthropomorph |              |             | Kurmi                   | *            |             | Bhelwara                        |
| Delicate         | Floral   |              |             | Turi (Basket-Maker)     | *            |             | Kuju                            |
| Simple           | Circular, Squared                                      |              | *           | Bhuiya                  |              | *           | Dato, Khapariwa                 |
| Electric         | Birds, Animals, Humans                                 |              | *           | Ganju                   | *            | *           | Saheda                          |

A small note to the above may be appropriate. The Munda comb painting is often done with the fingers instead of with the comb, and the Bhuiya comb painting is also often done with the fingers only, a style also practiced by some Oraons. The Prajapatis or potters like the Kumhars also use their fingers instead of combs sometimes, but generally Prajapati art is always comb cut and small fine bamboo combs are made by the women specifically for the purpose. The Oraons sometimes use the curving Basera motif similar to the Bhuiya. This design is a series of semi-circles, and has a sacred significance as a mountain (Mesopotamia) and bamboo (India) and is always drawn along the top of walls on which the Khovar art is painted. It is stylistically similar to the archaic Sumerian and Babylonian motifs representing a house when it appears in a squared form. Basera translated mean goddess of the bamboo grove. (Bas = bamboo; Era= goddess)



EVOLUTION OF FORMS FROM  
HAZARIBAGH'S PRE-HISTORIC ROCK-ART

| Rock ART  | WARLI   | SOHRAI  | TATOO  | OTHER   |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| <br>SIDPA<br><br>1500 | <br>WARLI-<br>MARRIAGE<br>MANDALA<br> | <br>BHILWARA.<br>KURMI SOHRAI<br> | <br>KURMI GODNA.<br><br>ARCHAK SUMER:<br>HOUSE | <br>BYLEORUSSIAN<br>CHICKEN-FOOT<br>WITCH'S HOUSE<br> |
| <br>SIDPA<br>1500  | <br>ORAN GODNA   | <br>KURMI GODNA  | <br>SOHRAI-KOHVAR  | <br>BAIGA GODNA  |
| <br>ISCO  | <br>BHILWARA<br>KURMI SOHRAI  | <br>MOHENJODARO   | <br>TAMGALY-<br>ROCKART.  | <br>ROCK ART ANIMALS  |
| <br>ISCO   | <br>SOHRAI   | <br>SOHRAI   | <br>SOHRAI   |   |
| <br>SARAYA   | <br>MOHENJODARO  | <br>TROT CRESTS,<br>C-FRANCE. 20,000BP<br>"Sorcerer"   | <br>DRAKENSBERG<br>RANGE. S.AFRICA. 9000BP<br>"Musician"   | <br>KHOVAR   |
| COMMON TO KOHVAR AND SOHRAI<br><br>1500  |   | <br>RAHAM<br>KURMI GODNA<br>1500   | <br>GODNA<br>1500   | <br>KHOVAR.<br>1500   |
|   |   | <br>CONTEST MOTIF  | <br>KHOVAR.  | <br>MOHENJODARO  |

16. 12. 2000

Bulu Imam

## CONCLUSION

In concluding this note on the art of tribal societies in Hazaribagh it is essential to once again point out the direct evolution of the prehistoric rockart of the region into the present village painting. Over many thousands of years nothing has changed the line or the understanding of space and form. The animal forms painted by the Ganjus is a direct inheritor of the rockart of Satpahar. The Birhors alone still express themselves in cryptic forms as primitive as the oldest rockart. The rockart of Hazaribagh is vastly older than that of Likhanya in Mirzapur or even Bhimbetka and Raisen . While continuous village traditions have been found in Smardha in Bhopal and in the Warli villages inheriting the rockart traditions of Raisen in Madhya Pradesh, and probably such traditions exist elsewhere also, the Hazaribagh hills offer a unique example of the continuity of a prehistoric tradition. More requires to be done to understand the links of continuity between prehistoric rockart sites and the tribal art of the region. If this could be done it could prove a valuable tool in drawing to the conscience of mankind the irreparable damage to the history of human evolution and culture being done by the present rash big dam projects like the Narmada Dam or the other vast destructive mining and dam projects in India as in the North Karanpura Valley in Hazaribagh. Before we pass let us not forget that the Govindsagar dam near Simla on the Sutlej sank the entire calendar of palaeoarchaeological antiquity surrounding *Ramapithecus*, man and one of the most valuable regions of archaeology in the world. Again and again the politicians of India have drowned or mined the earliest sites of early human societies. This is I believe was done because this gives proof of indigenous ancestry and identity , rights to the tribal peoples living in these regions upon whose forest, hydel, and mineral assets the politicians have cast an avaricious eye. The time has come when we must speak out against this destruction of our indigenous rights and cultural heritage, which is not our heritage alone, but that of mankind. It belongs to our children, and their children, and the unborn generations of humankind who in the future are going to ask where man came from, how he grew in wild and pristine valleys, how he carried his heritage within him over unimaginable periods of time, and across great distances of the globe. The petty politician, keen only to preserve his shaky chair this year and the next, is never going to give a thought to such matters for certain. In my experience even the UNESCO is a paper tiger. I have repeatedly asked their help, through the proper channels, and in the prescribed guidelines, for protecting the North Karanpura valley from opencast coal mines which will destroy the entire valley but they have done nothing about it. To the conscientious objector I refer INTACH's 1993 Appeal to UNESCO to declare the North Karanpura Valley as an Endangered World Heritage Site. There are many other aspects of this region of Jarkhand which require to be brought to light, and which have been consistently overlooked either deliberately or through ignorance. In either case, it is now high time for India to review the true civilizational identity of her heritage and stop the false mantra of the Indus Valley being the only civilization in India and recognize our older, regional civilizations of an equally high, and far older, stature.

Traditional occupations have allowed traditional societies the opportunity to maintain their independence and avoid the regimentation imposed by the wage earning structured by government development in order to absorb them into the mainstream and make their environments immediately vulnerable to exploitative development. Such artisan craftsmanship as metalworking, smallscale commerce and manufacture, basket making and

carpentry, oil extraction and other crafts have made our people extremely independent. This has given independence from the state. This way of life is under attack from the western social order being imposed under the process of homogenization to afford the control of the local market.



*Kurmi women, Jorakath*



## APPENDIX

## Appendix-I

### Origin of the Goddess Versus Buffalo

The Indian Lion is a non-indigenous species of the Asiatic Lion *Panthera leo*, and in probability the last survivor of the species since the Asiatic Lion has in all likelihood disappeared from Iraq and Iran where it was once found. The Indian Lion ranged over the northern half of India north of the Narmada valley. It is now restricted in its range to the Gir Forest in the Junagadh District of Kathiawad where the number is between two and three hundred. There is nothing to prove the lion being indigenous to India. There is no evidence of it in prehistoric rockart, whereas the tiger has been found (with a tigress) in the rockart of Hazaribagh. Neither is the lion depicted in the Indus Valley seals, where the tiger is represented again and again. The lion appears tangentially at a crucial juncture of Indian history when the Mesopotamian impacts were preparing to cross over from Sumer and Ur of the Chaldees to India. The lion was chosen by Asoka as his emblem as recently as the third century BC. And the range of this animal practically coincided with that of Asoka's kingdom from the Northeast to Bactria in the upper half of India. The lion was a typically Mesopotamian icon and is found in the earliest stelae from the Early Dynastic Period of Mesopotamia in a fully developed cultural flowering ( Khafajeh, 2600 BC), and from Proto-Elamite seals from Susa in Iran (c.3100 BC –2900 BC) . The term *Singham* denoting a lion is a Tamil word, not an Aryan one, and since the lion was never found in South India we can assume Singh is a purely South Indian form. It is clearly related with the appellation given to deity since Singh referred to the horned stag of the Mother Goddess, or Rik, which gave its name to the Rik Veda. In Kathiawar in Gujarat the Kathiawadi name for lion is *Sawach*, resembling the East African name for lion, Simba.

The lion is found in the so called “contest motif” form in the ivory handle of a knife from Gebl-el-Arak in Upper Egypt carved in the Sumerian style of the Jemdet Nasr period (c.3000 BC) .The “contest motif” in Mohenjo-daro is shown as between man and tiger (Seal No.M-308). If the lion is not native to India the question must be asked , “When did the lion come ?” The answer lies in the affirming of its arrival with the Sumer Aryans. For historically, in a study of the King Lists by Waddell and others, our earliest historical contact with West Asia appeared precisely at the time of the so called “fall of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro” ! We are to bear in mind that the lion is long associated with the goddess in West Asia as in the goddess on the back of a lion from Hacilar-IV (Turkey, 5000 BC). A deity on the back of the lion is new in India. This may be the earliest evidence of the *Vimana* cult in which a deity is given an animal vehicle, and which after the Aryan conquest of North India turned the tribal totem animals into *vimanas* of the deities of the Brahminical pantheon. This *Vimana* tradition of deities standing on animals is Assyrian. The maned lion has been associated with the Sun as symbol of Day and conqueror of Night or the moon goddess in West Asia. The moon goddess was a matriarchal deity associated with the crescent-horned buffalo. The idea of the triumph of Light over Darkness is an ancient idea from Sumeria to China. Long back it was used to divide patriarchal and matriarchal power in the human mind. The association of the mother goddess with the lion was an Aryan development plainly seen in the earliest stelae and relief carvings from Mesopotamia as I will proceed to show. The mother goddess being associated with the lion was never taken into an open conflict between her and the buffalo, symbol of tribes. The buffalo was worshipped as the tribal deity throughout South and Southeast Asia and may well be taken as the national animal of the tribal world. It was when Aryan penetration from Sumer established power in the Indus valley and thrust through

North India at the heart of the tribal kingdoms along the Ganges Valley, then clothed in forests, and across the Vindhyas even perhaps, but failed to reach the valley of the Narmada, that the goddess was placed in open conflict with the buffalo, since they were both inherently tribal symbols. The image of Goddess Durga accompanied by a lion destroying the buffalo deity, termed a demon – Mahesh, an Asura demon specifically – is a “contest motif” of a new order. In Mesopotamia the earliest “contest motif” examples depict a man grappling lions while a goddess stands to the side, or the contest between lion and buffalo, but the attack of the goddess, riding a lion, upon a buffalo deity is completely unheard of in West Asia, or in India before the arrival of the Aryans. The fight between lion and buffalo in Mesopotamia is also centred about a man (Cylinder Seal, Fara, BM 89538, c.2650BC).



*Illustration-1*

On the other hand the horned deity appears in Indian rockart as far back as over ten thousand years ago. The horned deity is pictured as the patron saint of Mohenjodaro, An, in a famous steatite seal from that place. The horned wheeled animal, the buffalo, is common to the Indus Valley as a votive deity. It is equally found in the chalcolithic excavations of S.C.Roy in Ranchi, and in my discovery in the rockart at Isco. The earliest examples of a goddess riding on a lion comes from Yazilikaya, and a Hittite goddess with child in arms riding standing on a lion's back from Northern Mesopotamia, c.1500 BC



(Turkey, c.1300 BC, and 1300 BC) *Illustration-2a&2b*



*Illustration-3*

Clearly, these figures located right below the Black Sea, on the route of the Aryan descent from Georgia and Gali into Iran evolved into the mother goddess riding the Asian Lion encountered by the Central Asians for whom the animal was novel. The patriarchal deity Assur, also depicted as riding a *horned lion* followed by his consort Ninlil riding a lioness



(Maltai, Assyria , 800 BC)

*Illustration-4* points clearly to the development of a cult.

## Appendix-II Historical Origin of Brahmanism

The beginnings of Brahmanism, or Vedic Hinduism, a solar as well as lunar cult initially, can be traced back to the Sumerian Kings dynasty around c.2350-2200 BC. In the then ruling dynasty of Ur in Chaldea an outpost of Mesopotamia inhabited largely by Semitic tribes but ruled by a pure-blooded Aryan house. The Third Dynasty of Ur of the Isin Lists was founded by one Uruash-Zukum, who also held the title of Ricika or Rishi, a priest-king. He had married the daughter of Gudu the Aryan king of Ur who traced his descent back to Gora, the Persian name of Georgia, for its fair inhabitants. Gora or Goda was also the name given by the swarthy Persians to the horse from Georgia (Akhhalteke) the spring source of the thoroughbred horses of our modern world.

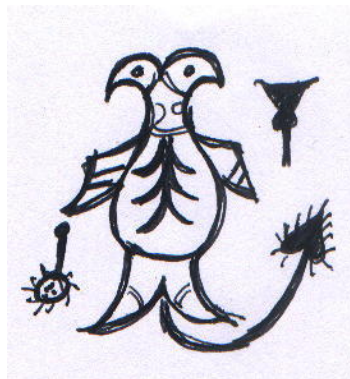
Goda was also known as Gadhi in the King Lists of the Indus, or the Indian Chronicles as they are called by historians. Uruash-Zukum-Ricika, a priest-king of the Aryan Fire Cult embraced the moon worship of his wife's country in Chaldea, and he it was who built the famed ziggurat of the Mother Goddess at Ur, before excavation known to the wandering Bedouin of the desert as the Mound of Tar, for tar was used in the joining of its bricks (c.2100 BC) He was followed by a son and three successive generations thereafter bearing the title SIN meaning the Mother Goddess. The word Sin in the Semitic language means the moon, even as it did in the Indus at the time of the Indus invasion, and from this came the river Sind and the origin of India's fair name. The name SIN was appropriate for the line of Uruash-Zukum the founder of the Brahmanist priest-kings who would one day go on to rule India through the Indus. The third of his descendants bearing the title SIN was Purash-Sin or Parashu-Ram, who created the order of *Baru* priests who were raised to the first category as a hereditary caste in the state, and a position which came to be known as Brahmin, and a status which they have continued to possess as a perquisite of their portfolio of privileged knowledge of the *srutis* and *shastras* of which they remained also the hereditary custodians.

They have continued to possess these privileged powers over four millennia down to the present day in India. The Guti or Gothic Dynasty was the Sumerian/Aryan dynasty ruling Chaldea's tribal Semitic population and tracing its ancestry to Noah's son Sem. The name Gudia or Guti referred to Goth ancestry as I noted earlier, and these Guti were the ruling people of Asia Minor who annexed and ruled Mesopotamia after the fall of Sargon, and were in fact the original Sumerians. The historical record proves that the Sumerians, Aryans, and Goths were the same people and that these titles were synonymous. The name Gudia and Guti come down as common everyday names related to these peoples in the child's doll, Gudia, and the common game played with stones on a board called Guti. The very name of the mourning dove, common to the West Asian regions as in India, Guta, owing to its call, is Guta-Gori. As we have seen the horse or Ghoda, so freely depicted as an object of worship with a rider standing on it called Pashupati, Lord of Animals, is also Ghoda. All these observations are simply the unveiling of research. In their cumulative impact they may help to unveil the identity of early India --- and Indians. If they do, my purpose will have been served.

Below I give the Equation of the Ur Dynasty Kings with the Aryan Kings of the Indian King Lists, as given by L.A.Waddell in his masterwork, *The Makers of Civilization in Race and History*, 1929, p.389),

| Isin Lists                | Indian Lists           | Serial No. in List |
|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1.Uruash-Zikum            | Uru-Ricika             | 50                 |
| 2.Dungi or Duk-gin (Samu) | Dagni - Jama           | 51                 |
| 3. Purash-Sin (Burgin)    | Parashu-Rama           | 52                 |
| 4. Surash-Sin (Gimil-Sin) | Sushena                | 53                 |
| 5. Il-Ibil-Sin            | Il-Ibila of Shaturatha | 54                 |

The Indus Valley, after this initial flowering outward from the calyx of the Indian Peninsular's aboriginal civilization met the urge of the Aryan to conquer in the valley of the Five Rivers (Poonjab), around the middle of the third millennium BC, its opponent a small Sumerian colony of the larger Mesopotamian empire, from the first Phoenecian Dynasty downwards to the Ur Dynasty. The moon-cult of Ur was assimilated into the sun cult by the moon being masculinated as the firstborn son of the Sun, Shakha, from which derives Shakha-hari, an early cult of Brahminism, finding expression in the god Krishna. Brahmanism is a Vedantic offering from the Upanishads as we today know the term, related with the Brahmanas or bards, a lower order to the Brahmin, therefore we must be careful in using the term carelessly for it carries two opposite meanings our western historians are not fully familiar with. The Upanishads are an 800 BC flowering, and constitute the Hinduism of the Vedanta. The Brahmana referred to by Waddel is the old order of the Brahmin also the progenitor of Brahminism, the cult whose authority rests on the authority of authorship of the Vedas and its Soma cult from the highlands of Iran. In the inscriptions of Parashu-Rama he called himself an incarnation of Brahma. Here too must we be careful for the concept of a universal presence named as Brahma in the Upanishads was perhaps novel to the Mesopotamian mind in its innocence when only two gods had existed, the male and female. When Parashu-Rama called himself the incarnation of Brahma he was referring to the Old Testament idea *of a God who moves on the waters* called in the Vishnu Purana, "the monarch of the Brahmans" in agreement with the Ur Dynasty title of the moon as "the first-born of the god Sakh." If Brahma represents the moon, Vishnu represents the Sun, and Shiva the tribal forest-god of the earth. Thus do the unity of the planetary configuration related to earth come to rest upon the bosom of the universal Brahma.



## Appendix-III

### Indigenous Status of Indian Tribes and Scheduled Castes

The Government in India does not recognize the indigenous status of tribals and Scheduled Castes, nor does it recognize their worship as being independent of Hinduism. Tribes get listed as Hindus. This has been the ongoing problem of each successive Census of India questionnaire since British times, when the discrepancy was noted by J.H.Hutton in the 1931 Census and W.G.Archer in the 1941 Census. The religions of Hinduism and Buddhism have grown out of tribal religion in India. This form of worship is animistic and termed by some scholars Animism. Since it is connected with the mother goddess and the mountain it is called worship to Marang Buru, the great mountain deity, which is female. Since one of the forms of the mother is the trees it is implicit in the worship of the sacred grove called Sarna Puja. Within Hinduism itself there is a deep schism or divide between Brahminism and Vedantism. The worship of the artisan classes or craft guilds which are the soul of rural India in hundreds of thousands of villages, their worship is primarily to the mother goddess Devi, whose living form is the married woman, called Devi. The earth mother and the goddess associated with the tree is an ancient Harappan tradition. The tribals and semi-Hinduised tribals offer blood sacrifices, believe in good and evil spirits, place deities, and do not follow the brahminical fire and solar worship or the use of the temple and the Brahmin priest. They worship in their household through the house-holder, who is the male head of the family, at the household shrine. There is archaeological evidence of this form of worship being practiced in Harappa and Mohenjodaro, and the other Indus Valley cities and villages. The worship of Shiva is very strong among these people, as may be seen in the images of Shiva as the Lord of Animals on the back of the horse (Ghoda) or bull, common to the harvest festival of Sohrai, He is also believed to be Prajapati, the divine potter, who created humans from clay. The importance of tree worship in Harappan culture is devoted to the ficus or fig tree, an ancient Biblical symbol also, and in Harappa and Mohenjodaro the popular tree found associated with the mother goddess is the Pipal (*Ficus religiosa*). Upon questioning, I have found definite association between the male deity Shiva and the Bilwa tree (*Semecarpus anacardium*) in Sohrai. Shiva is the specific male deity of the artisan village dwellers.

The temple is alien to Indian worship, and may be traced to the ziggurat tradition of Mesopotamia. In the village as I have pointed out, a low mudden altar is used, the householder worshipper facing towards the east, and I have confirmed that it has nothing to do with sun worship. In the forest tribes similar mudden platforms are used with small wooden or stone deities representing the ancestors placed on them, and such worship is common to tribes as diverse as the hunting Santals and the nomadic trapping Bihors. So we can clearly find a connection between the village artisan tribes and the forest tribes using identical shrines with small wooden effigies, without any phallic significance. On the other hand the village shrines often have a ficus leaf placed on the mudden altar in mark of the mother goddess. I am of the belief that the small stones found in association with these household shrines in the Indus Valley were not of phallic significance. Stones are sacred to all tribals. They represent the mountain. The mountain, Marang-Buru is considered sacred. This is a very ancient tribal tradition that is common to the world, including the Semitic populations of the Chaldees. It is equally, found among the independent palaeo-ethnographic Aboriginal cultures of Australia, where the mountain is considered a form of the ancestor being and linked through the Dreamings with the Ancestors. Among the tribals of India the buffalo is considered sacred and known by Hinduism as Mahesh-Asura, a form of Demon,



who is slayed by the mother goddess Durga during the Durga Puja festival. Since the buffalo is used for purposes of agriculture and prominent in the religious rites of Sohrai in the semi-Hinduized villages during the Sohrai festival, immediately after Divali, I see no reason for the buffalo to be associated with a demon. There is no belief in rebirth among the tribals. Among the Birhors we have specifically recorded both the male and female traditions in this regard. The Birhor medicine man, the Bhagat or Ojha, strictly believes that a dead person's spirit returns to the ancestor shrine, or Bonga-Asthan placed immediately to the east of the village (tanda). However, Birhor women believe that if a child is born shortly after the death of a member of the tribe, the spirit will take up its abode in this person. With great reluctance the Birhor medicine man of Sultana tanda accepted this. Belief in rebirth, the idea of *Karma* or punishment for wrongdoings in a new birth, is not general to the semi-Hinduized. None of the traditional Hindu deities appears among any of these people in householder worship. The cow, respected by the people for its milk, is eaten by the aboriginal tribes in India.

The aborigines of India have strong belief in place deities or what is known as Landform among the Australian Aborigines in the worship of the mountain as the emergence of a primordial human form to the extent of it becoming synonymous with a great deity, mother goddess, ancestor spirit. In North America and the British Isles the mountain resembling a pregnant female figure from a certain angle is known to researchers as a Recumbent Landscape Figure (RLF). The cult of the mountain is found in the ziggurat and its manifestations from Mesopotamia, through southeast Asia to South America and Mexico. It is known to the Red Indians, or First Nations of America. There has been much talk of the dilution of tribal societies through intermarriage in India, but I see this as an attempt to extinct the tribes, a process which is strongly effected through the changing of Scheduled Tribes into Scheduled Castes in India. I will like to point out that the tribal society is strictly endogamous and no question of racial intermixing among the aboriginal tribes in India can be accepted on a racial basis. On the other hand, the Hindu caste society makes it impossible for caste Hindus to marry tribals. These claims are prejudiced and based on faulty colonial scholarship of the nineteenth century when the emasculation of the tribes in India consequent to the tribal uprisings became imperative. This tendency was seized upon as a weapon by the bureaucracy of modern independent India, many of these people being unaware of what they were doing to slay scions of their own posterity. The Scheduled Tribe population of India is 12%, Scheduled caste 16% and Other Backward Castes 34%. (The guardian, London, 1994). Those indigenous groups bringing the figure the figure of indigenous to 62%. Recently fifty four tribal groups were added to the OBC list, lowering the ST figure. They included tribe like Teli, Lohar etc.

I have presented these views before the Consultations of the World Bank on the Revision of Operational Directive 4.20 concerning Indigenous peoples and their identification held at Ranchi and New Delhi in 1998. My views have found mention in the Bank's published document in the South Asia Sector, Social Development, December 1999 publication THE World Bank Policy On Indigenous Peoples. I am grateful for the opportunity to draw to the attention of the general public the discrimination being made against indigenous peoples in India, especially in view of the fact their indigeneity is anthropologically, archaeologically, and scientifically accepted by the scientific community in India. The status of indigenous identity will give our people a right to refer to international provisions for the protection of indigenous societies, specifically the United Nations (draft) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

## Appendix-IV

### Exhibitions of the Tribal Womens Artists Cooperative A Project of The Indian National Trust For Art & Cultural Heritage **HAZARIBAGH**

Note on the Tribal Womens Artists Cooperative (TWAC). Started through two DAP grants from the Australian High Commission, New Delhi 1993-94, 1994-95 under Dr. Mark Thomson for the purposes of developing the tribal artform of combcut Khovar painting done during the marriage season, and the ochre painted harvest art of Sohrai painting, both derived from the Mesolithic rockart of the North Karanpura Valley, Hazaribagh.

-----

#### **International exhibitions**

|  |                              |      |
|--|------------------------------|------|
| Hogarth Gallery,                                       | Paddington, Sydney,          | 1995 |
| National Gallery Of Australia Vision of Kings (shoppe) | Canberra, Jan.               | 1996 |
| Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre                          | Casula, Sydney, May-June,    | 1996 |
| Footscray Community Centre                             | Melbourne, Novem-Decem.      | 1996 |
| Morree Plains Gallery                                  | Morree, NSW, February        | 1997 |
| Freemantle Arts Centre                                 | Perth, March                 | 1997 |
| Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre                          | Casula, Sydney, July-Aug,    | 1997 |
| Bathurst Art Gallery                                   | Bathurst, NSW, Mar-May,      | 1998 |
| Tamworth Art Centre                                    | Tamworth, NSW, Dec-Feb       | 1998 |
| Gallery 482  | Brisbane, Qld., Feb-April    | 1998 |
| Nexus Gallery  | Adelaida, SA, Jun-July,      | 1998 |
| Hogarth Gallery  | Paddington, Sydney Aug-Sept. | 1998 |
| Djamu Gallery, Customs House<br>(Australian Museum)    | Circular Quay, March-June,   | 2000 |
| Rebecca Hossack Gallery                                | London, May-June,            | 2000 |
| Victoria Crafts Council                                | Melbourne, April May         | 2001 |
| Bellevue Gallery                                       | Berlin, August               | 2001 |
| Therese Dion Gallery of Contemp. Art                   | Montreal, Canada, Sept.      | 2001 |
| Eppelheim Gallery                                      | Germany, March-April         | 2002 |
| Kassel Gallery   | Germany, July-August         | 2002 |
| Stuttgart Gallery                                      | Germany, October             | 2002 |

#### **National Exhibitions**

|   |                      |      |
|---|----------------------|------|
| Gallery Chemould                                    | Bombay, July         | 1995 |
| Sakshi Gallery                                      | Bangalore, Sept-Oct, | 1996 |
| India International Centre                          | New Delhi, Aug.      | 1998 |
| Gallery Chemould                                    | Calcutta, April,     | 1999 |
| Gallery Chemould                                    | Bombay, July-Aug,    | 1999 |
| Paramparik Karigar (National Gallery of Modern Art) | Bombay, December     | 1999 |
| Cymroza Gallery                                     | Bombay, March,       | 2000 |
| Cymroza Gallery                                     | Bombay, August       | 2002 |
| Max Muller Bhavan                                   | Delhi, August        | 2002 |



## Appendix- V

Indian J.Pl. Genet. Resources 11(1):93-95, 1998

### Short Communication

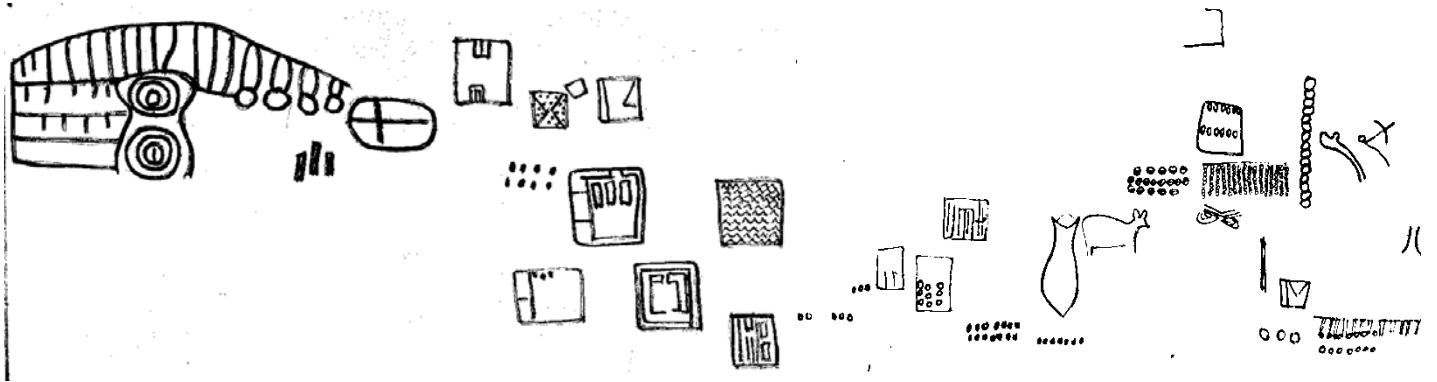
#### RICE VARIETIES IN ANTIQUITY INDIA

**B.D Sharma**

National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources,  
Regional Station, Shimla 171 004 (Himachal Pradesh)

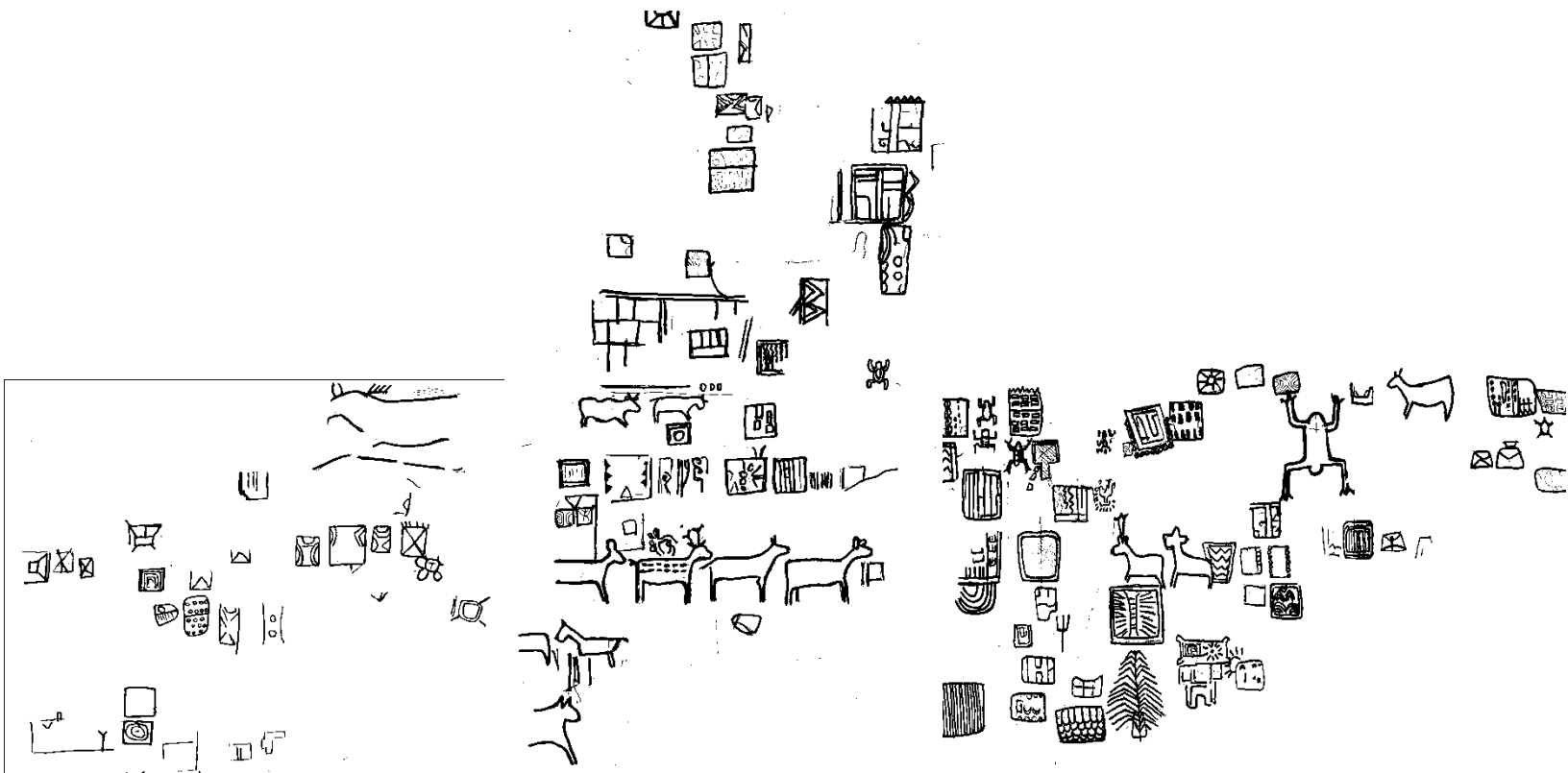
Indian subcontinent possesses rich diversity of agri horticultural crop plants because of its unique geographical features. There have been much less efforts in the field of archaeology to reveal the prehistory of India as a whole and the north-east in particular. J.H. Hutten and J.P. Mills have made large collections of stone age tools from the Naga hill (Nagaland), North Cachar Hills (Karbi-Aanglong district of Assam), and the Garo Hill (Meghalaya). Based on these and other exploratory works Shri K.L Barua in his “ Prehistoric Cultures in Assam” notes that there was sufficient evidence provided by the stone age tools found in various excavations to prove that this region was inhabited by Neolithic or new stone age people who introduced shouldered celt, terraced rice cultivation, megalithic burials and matriarchy. There might have been influence of Hoabinhian culture in Garo Hills (Meghalaya) dating back to 10,000 B.C. or even earlier indicating a shift in subsistence pattern of food gathering and hunting food production. The Tripura excavations of Tilla site have been dated to upper Pleistocene Age of c.32,500 B.C. Thus scholars all over the world strongly believe that archaeology of nort-east India might reveal a lot of prehistory of human beings in India because this region is known as to have played a great role in domestication of a number of food plants including rice. This is supported by Ian C Glover (1985) who wrote, “India is the centre of greatest diversity of domesticated rice with over 20,000 (out of 50,000) identified varieties and strains and N-E India is the most favourable single area of the origin of domesticated rice”. This gives a clear indication of the earliest domestication of rice in India. Still more excavations may establish the fact on firm grounds. Another support to this is from the Sushrut Samhita which is said to have been compiled by the great surgeon Sushrut about 2600 B.C. (Ambika Dutt Shastri, 1953). In his monumental work, he has mentioned several rice varieties along with their medicinal uses. The Aryans used the term Brihi which over period of time changed to “Rihi” and then to “rice” towards the west of the continent. The belief gets further strengthened that the rice might have its origin and early domestication in India only.

## ROCKART PANELS



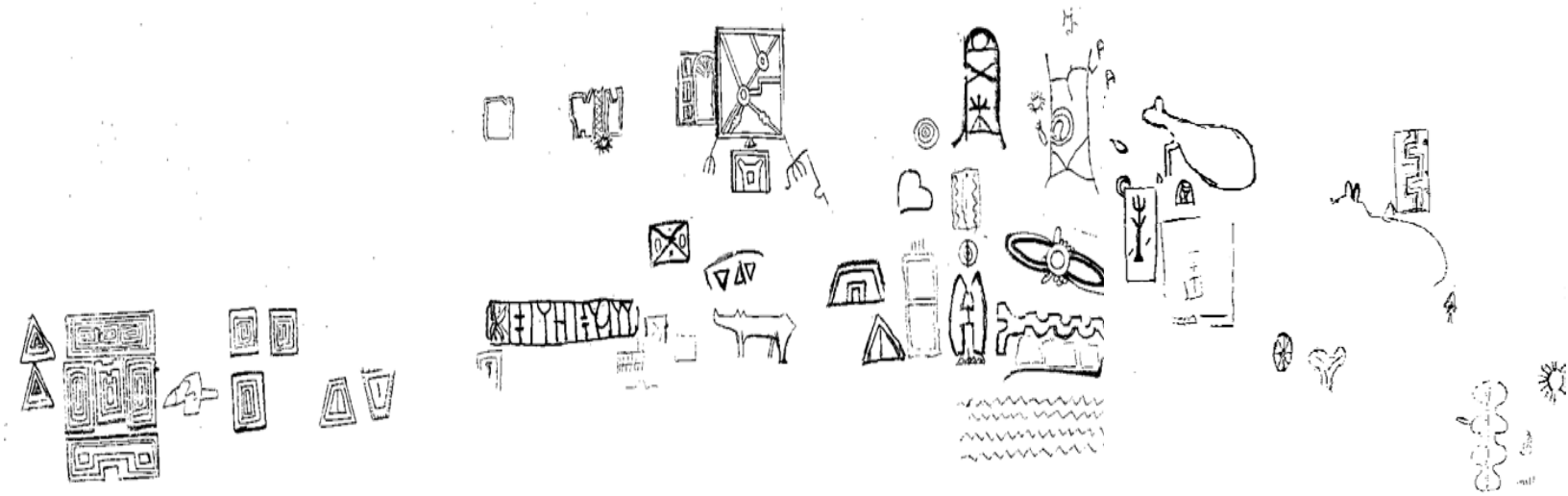
←-----→ ←-----→  
 Panel-1 (6'x15') Panel-2  
 (8'x15')

*KHANDAR (Satpahar-V)*

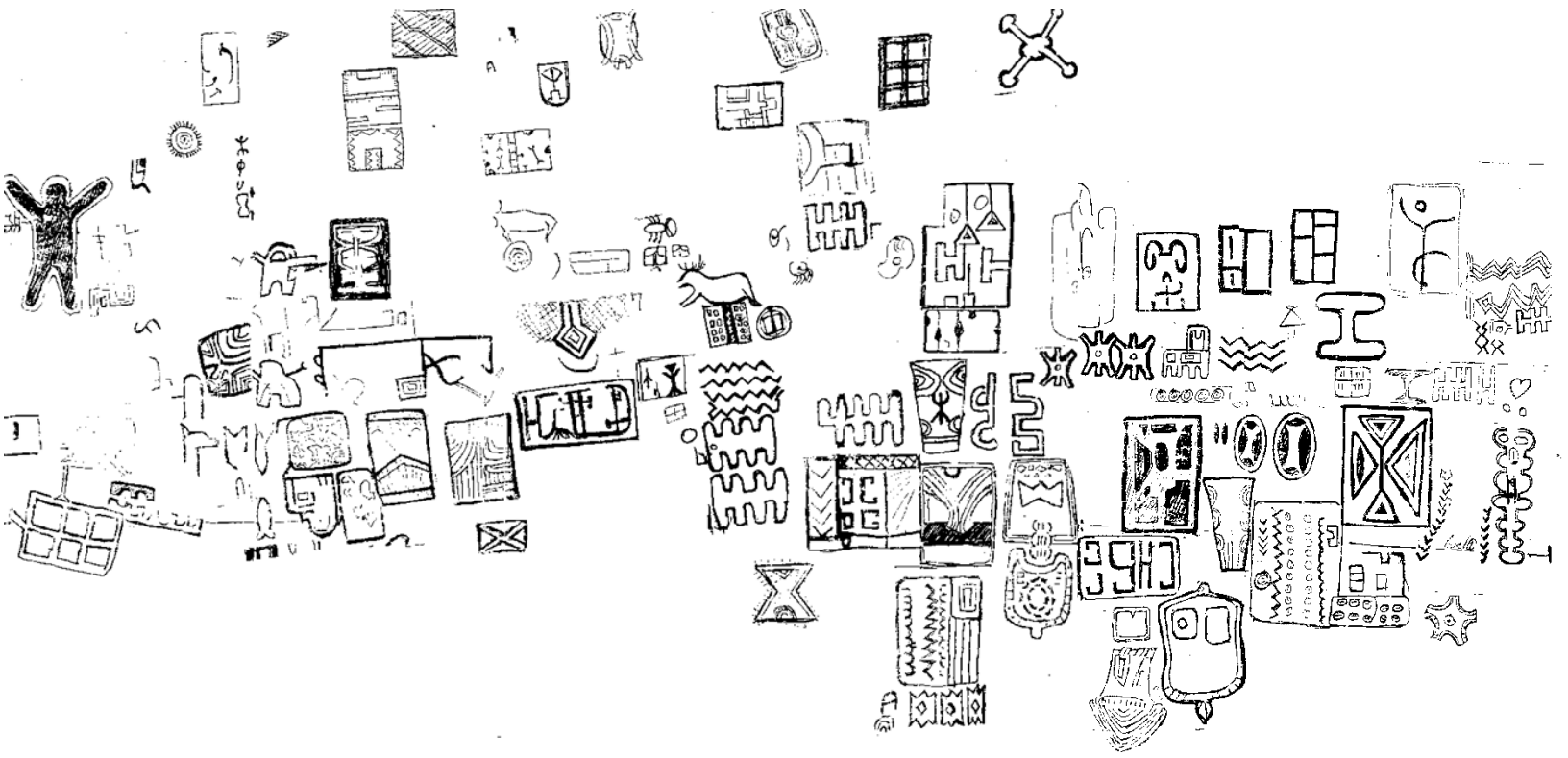


←-----→ ←-----→ ←-----→  
 Panel-1 (15 feet) Panel-2 (10 feet) Panel-3 (15 feet)

TETHANGI

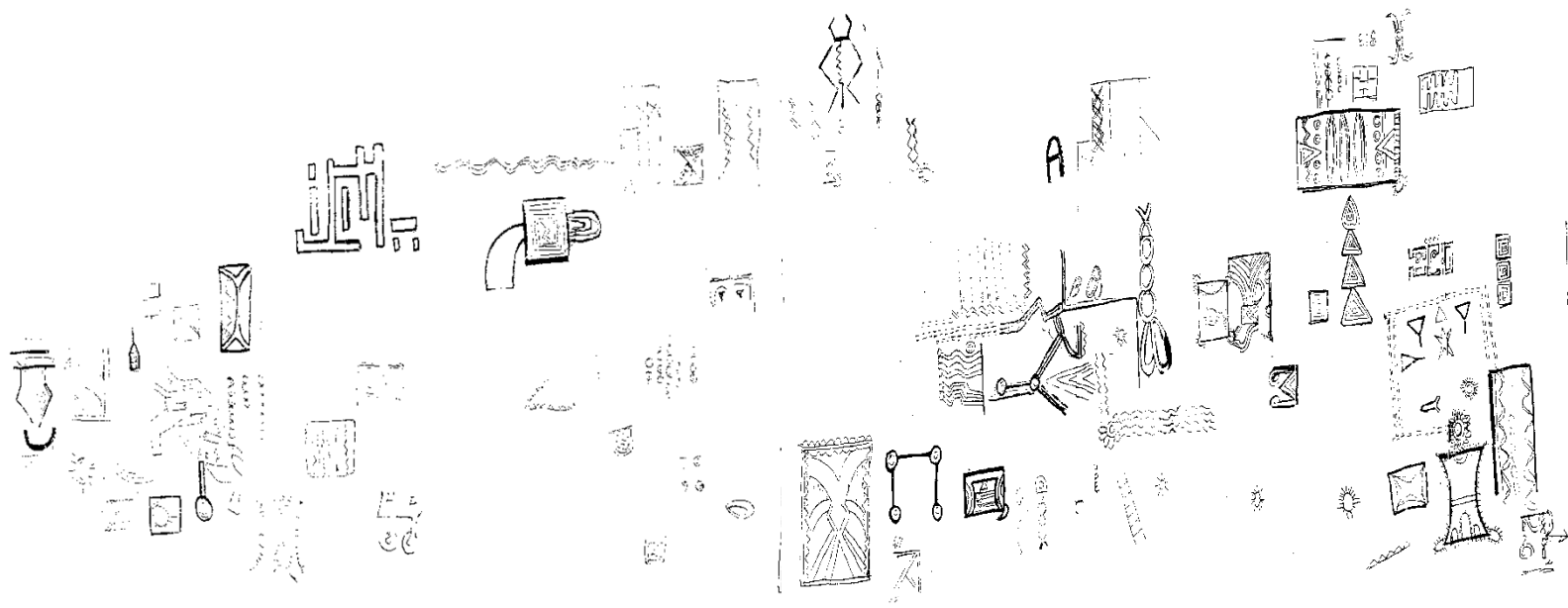


ISCO, panel- 1 (18' 7")

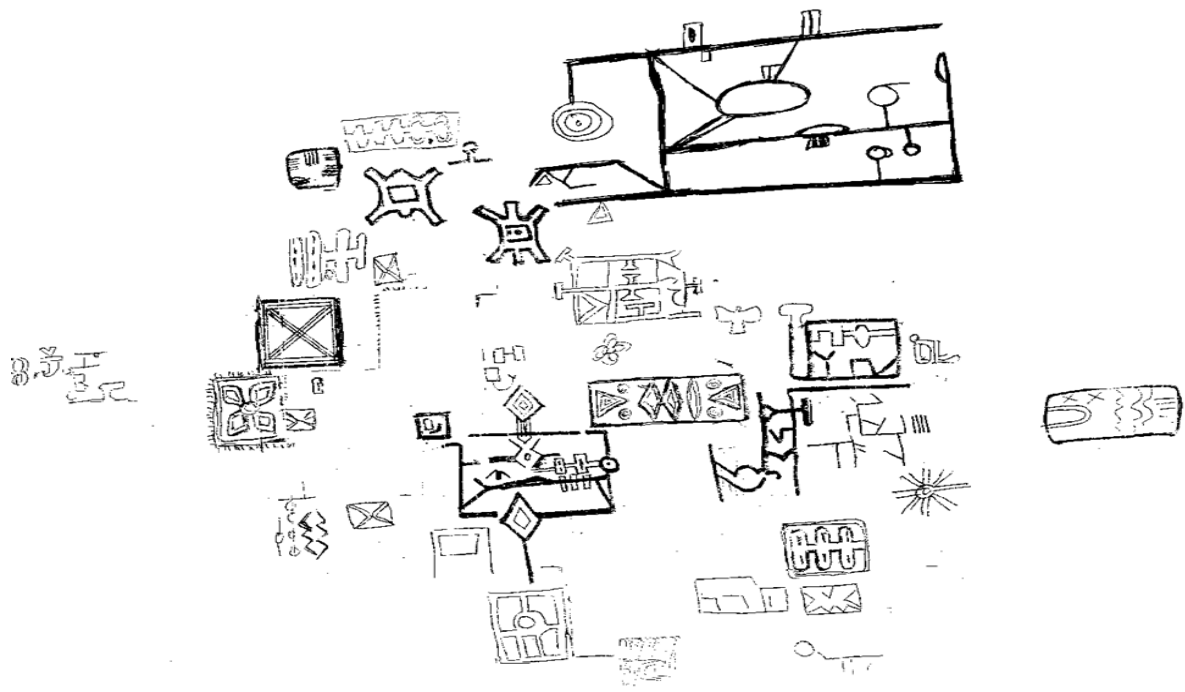


ISCO, Panel-2 (14' 10")

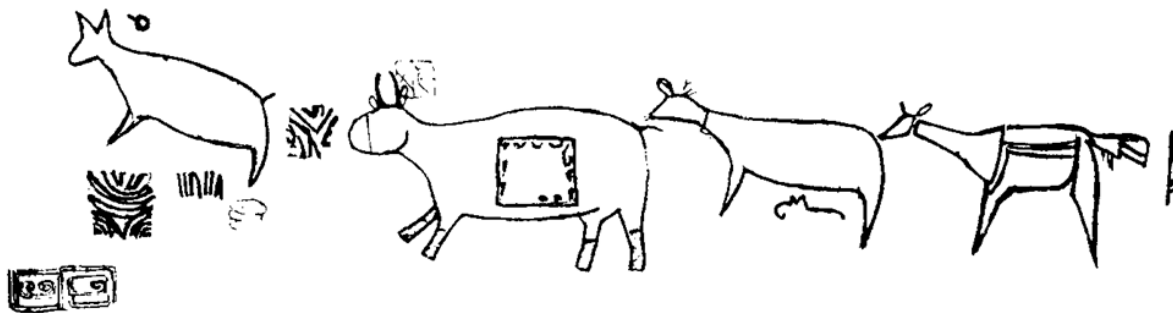




ISCO, Panel-3 (16' 10'')



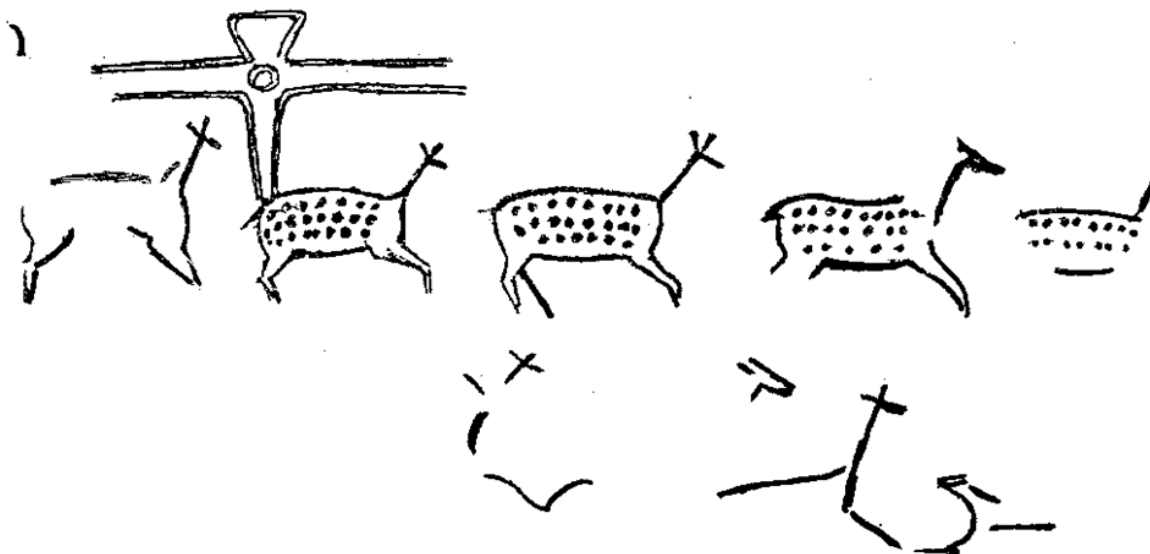
ISCO, Panel-4 (8' 10'')



Sat Pahar Rock Shelter (I) - 6' x 12'



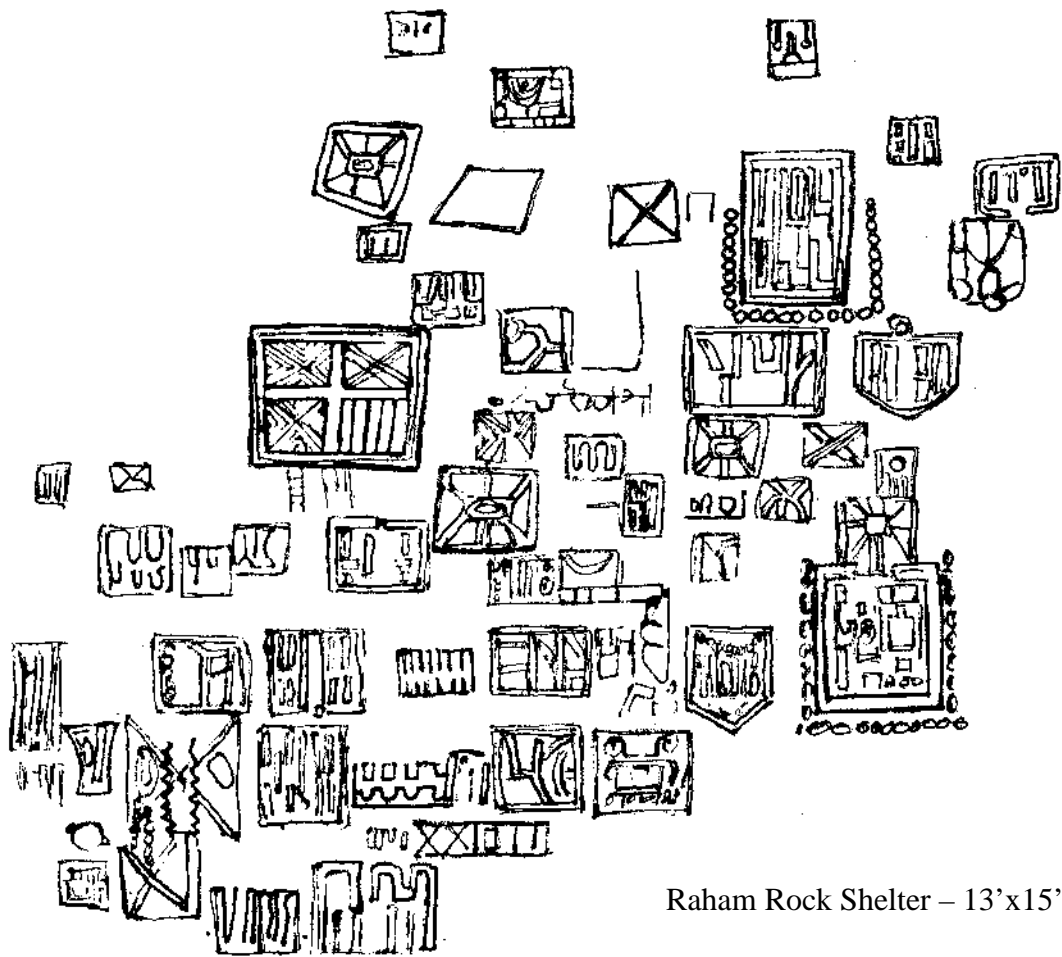
Sat Pahar Rock Shelter (II) - 3.6' x 14'



Satpahar Rock Shelter (III) - 7' x 10'



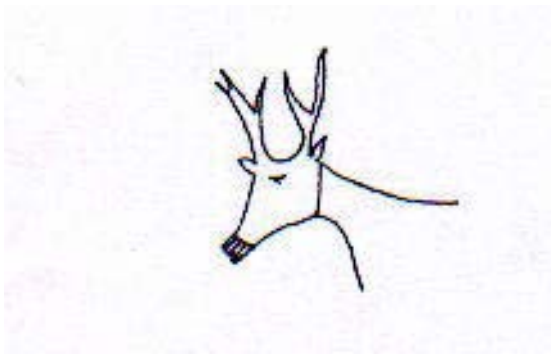
Saraiya Rock Shelter - 5' x 8'



Raham Rock Shelter - 13' x 15'



Sidpa Rock Shelter – 12'x15'



Gonda Rock Shelter, deer