A Reflection of Budhi-Garh, Madanpur

(A Unique Urban Civilization of India in the District of Kalahandi, Orissa)

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Introduction:

Archaeologically as well as historically Madanpur-Rampur is the most important zone in the District of Kalahandi, Orissa. So far as archaeology is concerned, there is no other significant zone like Madanpur-Rampur in the District of Kalahandi as well as in the State of Orissa. It may not be wrong to say that it is most important archaeological zone of India. But still it is being neglected by the district authority as well as State Archaeology. Madanpur-Rampur is situated between two rivers namely river Uttei and river Rahul. River Uttei of Rampur is a perennial one and river Rahul of Madanpur is not a perennial one. It is a river valley civilization. Madanpur was the ancient capital of Madanpur-Rampur Kingdom. It has been observed that within a radius of 30 K.Ms. from Madanpur-Rampur, archaeological remains of unique deposits dated back 3000 B.C. to Medieval period are found. Close to Madanpur-Rampur, the places of Archaeological importance are Budhi-garh at Madanpur, 12 K.Ms. in the North direction beside the main road; Shakush-garh, 18 KMs in the East direction; Mohangiri, 30 KMs. in the North-East direction; Ashur-garh 30 KMs in the South-West direction in between Narla-Road and Rupra-Road; Belkhandi, 30 KMs in the North-West direction at the confluence of the rivers Tel and Uttei; Amath-garh 30 KMs. in the West direction at the bank of river Tel. The archaeological sites are so interesting that, it attracts the research scholars even from European countries. Three years back an illegal excavation was done at Madanpur Budhi-garh archaeological site by some research scholars from Germany as one research scholar from Deccan University misguided the research scholars from Germany that he had got authorized permission for the excavation of Budhi-garh, but, in fact the date had been expired. Hence, this writer had interfered with the illegal excavation and stopped the same within a week. As because, they were taking away archaeological objects with them this writer protested to preserve the same in our local museum.

Culture of Madanpur-Rampur:

The ruins of Shiva Temples of Madanpur-Rampur, Amatngarh, Mohangiri, shakushgarh, Belkhandi etc. reflect that this zone was prosperous with urban civilization where Shaivism had flourished in ancient period. It would not be wrong to say that Madanpur-Rampur civilization was a civilization of temples. The recent discovery of stone idols of Lord Jagannath, Subhadra and Balabhadra at Tentulikhunti in the bank of river Tel reflects Vaishnavism of 9th to 10th century during the reign of Somavamsi King who had ousted the Gangas. For which the Gangas sought
help from the Naga-Dynasty of Chhotangpur to dethrone the Somavamsis from Kalinga. Kalinga was restored to the Gangas by the Nagas and the Naga-Dynasty settled at Tri-Kalinga with its Capital at Madanpur and at Bastar-Chakrakota with its capital at Chhindakgarh. Thus Madanpur was ruled by the Naga-Dynasty from 11th century to 20th century for about one thousand years.

Belkhandi, which is situated at the confluence of river Tel and Uteel was the main centre of trade and fair, because the river route was the main source of communication by that time. Shivaratri festival was the main festival of Belkhandi. Salt and other items were being transported through the river route. The people of Madanpur-Rampur were mainly agrarian in nature and peace loving. The deities being worshipped at Madanpur are Patta-Maheswaree, Patta-khanda, Chhatra-Bahutee, Veeru, Bhima and Durahisni and at Rampur the main deities are Manikeswaree, Dukree, Chhatra-Bahutee, Lankeswaree, Jal-Matee, Jena Dashmatee and Mangalaa. Both in Madanpur & Rampur Ganga Devi is being worshipped. Dushera is the main festival of this locality.

Characteristics of Budhi, Madanpur:

Madanpur is situated at the bank of river Rahul, a tributary of river Tel. It has an unique ancient urban civilization for a long period, i.e. from Microlith period to the Medieval period. The Archaeological deposit is locally known as "Budhi-garh" or "Garh Area", which is an area of 1000 Mtr. in length and 5000 Mtr. in width and a height of around 25 feet from the lower level of mound. Budhi-garh reflects the five phases of the civilization. Phase-I is Microlith (Mesolith) phase because in the lowest level of rain cut area small, polished quartzite axe with sharp edge are available. Phase-II is Neolithic phase. The burnt potteries have thick and coarse texture and fabric without slip. Phase III is Chalcolithic phase dated around 2,500 B.C. to 200 B.C. or later. The burnt potteries have both fine and coarse texture and fabric of different colours such as red-grey, black polish and grey with graffiti in it. There are iron pot and copper bangles etc. are also available. Phase-IV is ancient phase or Golden phase, where gold and silver coin of ancient period are found at Budhigarh. The last phase is Phase-V belong to the Medieval period. One silver coin of Sultanate period was found. But so far as the history of Madanpur is concerned, Madanpur was never under the Sultanate of Delhi nor under the Mughol. During the Medieval period Naga-Dynasty kings were ruling over Madanpur or Karunda. Hence, the Sultanate coin might have come from the adjacent Kingdom during trade-fare.

Structural Remains:

At around 15 feet below the mound of Budhi-garh, there is a structure of big burnt bricks and a cross joint well which indicates the partition of rooms. The walls are 32 inches in wide. The size of the bricks is 15" long, 10" inches wide and 2.8 inches or 7cm thick. The brick walls were filled up by mud to joint the brick. Such type of bricks are also found in Asurgarh, M. Rampur, Mohangiri and Amathgarh of Kalahandi District. At around 20 feet height from the low level of the mound there is a circular solid brick structure of 20 feet in diameter. It may be a brick tower or a gate of Budhigarh Fort. Because "Budhi-garh" means the old fort. The circular brick structure is of height equal to that of the mound at a distance of around 100 feet from the main mound. That circular structure might have been used as the grain mills like that of Harappa. " The Miller stood on brick platforms. Using wooden pestles, they crushed the grain in mortars, also made of wood, placed in the centre of the circle. Grains of wild barley
and wheat have been discovered on the site". (Louis Frederic)

Excavation Site:

The archaeological site which was illegally excavated by the above mentioned research scholars is 12'x12' in size. It was probably excavated up to 6' deep, now half of it is filled up. The upper layer is a thick hard red crust of one foot consisting of brick pebbles and sand. Just after the thick hard red crust there is a burnt black layer of one inch. Under the black burnt layer there is soft soil consisting of fragments of broken potteries. During excavation, the research scholars had found a copper bangle, base of knobbed potteries, arrows, iron chains which were being used to close the door of the house. These information have been collected from the labourers who were working during the excavation of the mound. The burnt layer indicate that, may be the Budhigarh civilization was attacked by the enemy and it was burnt to ashes or fire might have engulfed the Budhi-garh accidentally. After which the civilization was again restored by repairing the damage which is indicated by the thick hard brick pebbles crust in upper layer of the mound just above the burnt layer.

Antiquities:

For the last thirty years many research scholars have been visiting the archaeological site of Budhi-garh and many archaeological objects have been shifted or taken away or damaged by the local people. To protect such archaeological objects this writer has collected them from the upper layer of the mound and from the local people for a mini museum at the palace, Madanpur-Rampur, in the District of Kalahandi, Orissa. Though the museum is a small one, valuable collections such as gold and silver coins, one seal of red Jaspur, one rust free Tabiz of iron cup, ivory comb, black polished wares, red polish fine ware, fragments of potteries with graffiti of sun, quartzite polished white circular stone looking like marble stone and small quartzite polished stone having sharp edge are stored in it. Thus, these antiquities can be divided into three broad categories, viz. stone, terra-cotta and metal objects.

Stone Objects:

Different shapes and sizes of stone objects are found on the upper and lower level surface of Budhi-garh mound. These stone objects are brown, grey and white in colour and the stone used was granite, quartzite and sand stone. The stone objects which are collected from the surface of the mound are: ring-stone, stone bill, stone chisel, concave-cylindrical stone, grinder-stone, small flat circular stones and small stone axe, etc.

Ring-Stone:

Ring-stones found in the low level surface of rain cut area are brown in colour. The shape of ring-stones is different in size. The smallest circular ring-stone found is 2.3 inches in diameter with a hole in the centre. The second one is semi-curved triangle, 3.6 inches in diameter with a circular hole in the centre. The third one is half broken with a length of 5 inches. These ring-stones are made of sand-stone. The bottom is little bit flat in shape than the other side of the stone with an axial hole which is narrow circular in the centre portion of the ring-stone. Each ring stone has a rough surface and blunt edges. In Dwaraka and Somnath also different sizes and shapes of ring-stones are found. "The raw material used for this category is basal & are heavy. The basic features are low height, flat bottom, semi-curved top with an axial hole; diameter of the hole is same at both ends". (Puratattva 32 ; 132, 2002).
Stone-ball:

The stone ball is round in shape like a ball. White in colour, might be made of sand-stone and 2.5 inches in diameter. Most probably these stones were being used as the grinder stone because the stone ball has a polished surface.

Chisel stone:

A Chisel shape stone of brown colour with rough surface of granite stone. The upper portion is narrow square in size of one inch with a flat sharp edge of 1.2 inches in wide.

Concave-cylindrical stone:

Concave-cylindrical stone is white in colour, made of sand stone, with a length of 5 inches and a circumference of 7 inches. Both the end are semi-curved and middle portion of the cylinder is concave in shape. It may be used as grinder stone.

Grinder-stone:

Grinder-stone is of sand-stone, polished and white in colour. The bottom portion is thick, round, semi-curve of 2.3 inches in wide and the upper portion is narrow, long & thickness of one inch. Today in modern times also such type of grinder-stone is being used by people.

Small Flat Circular Stone:

Different sizes of small flat circular stone of sand-stone are found with a thickness of ½" and diameter of 1.6", 1.5" and 1.3". Accordingly the weight of the stone also vary. Such type of stones were also found in Mohenjo-Daro which were being used as weight (V. Smith).

Small Stone Axe:

Small stone axe are grey in colour, polished quartzite stone with a sharp edge of 1.8" width, 2.2" length and the shape is just like an axe of microlith age.

White Quartzite Polished Lid:

The white quartzite polished lid is of 3.5 cm. long and 2.9 cm. wide having circular polished smooth edge of 0.04 cm. thickness. The edge portion is little bit sharp to fit an object to keep the pot air tight. The upper portion looks like a marble stone where as the bottom portion is a polished transparent quartz. It looks as if both stone have stuck to each other like a doublet.

Terracotta Objects:

Budhi-garh is enriched with fragments of Terracotta objects like wares of different colours, shapes and sizes; toys of doll, bull, horse and elephant etc. The upper lid portion of a smoking pipe (Hooka), a decorative piece, is also found. The black, polished knobbed pottery is the special attraction of Budhi-garh. Graffiti marks are found in some of the fragments of the pottery and the potteries are of wheel thrown.

Black Polished Knobbed Ware:

Two fragments of black knobbed ware were also discovered, one (BGH 02) has half of a bowl with a radius of 5.05 cm. The height of the knob is 1.03 cm. The base of a knob is wider than the top portion. At the bottom portion there is graffiti mark of a cross. One arm of cross has extended longer than the other arms. Another bowl (BGH-01) is one third in shape with rim and a height of 5.03 cm. from interior base. The radius of the circumference of the rim of the bowl is 5 cm. There are wavy circular rings around the knob in both the black knobbed wares. It's a black slipped ware with fine and medium texture in the interior and exterior respectively. Putting a knob at the centre of the ware was might be done to make the base of the ware stronger to protect the ware from break and shock. According to Glover (1989) the knobbed vessels were not of every day use but used only.
Black Polished Ware:

There are fragments of Black Polished Ware of fine fabric with fine texture. Made of fine clay those are wheel thrown, slipped in black colour and have lustrous surface. This is well baked under perfect temperature. The clay looks grey, but due to black coating in the exterior surface it looks more black, polished and lustrous. It is as lustrous as the Northern Black Polished Ware.

Black-Tan Ware:

The Black-Tan Ware are found in rough, coarse fabric. The exterior rim and interior surface are black in colour as black slipped is used. And the exterior surface is tan in colour as Tan slipped is used. But due to continuous use of ware the surface looks rough. It's a thick in shape.

Grey-Black-Tan Ware:

The ware is made of fine clay and it looks grey in colour and of fine fabric. The interior surface is grey in colour. And the exterior low surface is tan in colour. It is a smooth, fine fabric of thin soapy, fine texture.

Fine Red Ware:

Fine Red Ware is made of fine clay and it looks grey in colour. Both the exterior and interior are painted with red slipped. It is having fine texture and lustrous surface of fine fabric.

Fine Grey Ware:

The fine grey ware is made of fine clay. It is a fragment of dish with fine fabric and soapy texture. The surface of both exterior and interior are very smooth and slippery, grey in colour. It seems like fragment a soap stone pot fragment. which is the of medium ware.

Black-Brown Ware:

Black-Brown Ware are made of coarse clay with coarse texture. The interior surface is without slipped with rough surface and the exterior surface is of medium texture without slipped. But exposed to fire properly for which the upper portion of the exterior surface looks black and the interior surface looks brown in colour.

Graffiti Mark:

One sun graffiti mark is seen in a fragment of black thick ware. Both interior and exterior have coarse texture. Another graffiti mark of cross was found in the base portion of a knobbed pottery.

Terracotta Flat Circular Object:

Like that of stone there are terracotta flat circular object with thin shape, which might have been used as weight like that of stone weight. But those are lighter than the stone weight.

Metal Objects:

The artisan of Budhi-garh were expert in science of alloy of metal. A pendant has been discovered which is neither silver nor iron. The metal looks like iron, but it is rust free. Hence, the alloy technique was much advance. The metal which were used in Budhi-garh were gold, silver, copper and iron.

Gold:

The gold was used as ornaments, coin and in some decorative small box. In the upper surface and in rain cut drain small ornament moulds are found.

Silver:

Four punch-marked coins and one circular coin of sultanate period are found. The punch-marked coins are square in size having weight of 2 gram, 2.300 mg. (two coins) & 1.900 mg. (one coin). The coins are made of pure silver of different sizes and shapes of 1cm x 1.3cm or little bit smaller. But some Asurgarh punch-marked coins
are copper-made coated with silver. In the reverse portion of Asurgarh punch-marked coin the little portion of copper is visible. The marks on the coin are not clearly visible. Such coins were issued by the "Janapadas" and "Mahajanapadas" (small and big states).

Copper :

In the surface of the mound copper bangles and beads are found. I think, copper was very less in used. The copper bangles and beads are in corroded condition.

Seal :

The seal of Budhi-garh are unique in shape, made of red Jasper, measuring 3.02 cm. of height. The bottom portion is wider of 1.08 cm. than upper portion of 1 cm. The bottom portion of the seal is 1.08 cms x1.02 cm. where one inscription is engraved. The seal content two symbols. One is a cross box with a vertical line on the middle of the box which is curved and symbol of a trident. Another one has two triangles in shape triangles attached side by side with a vertical line in the middle which has formed a circle on the top of the vertical line. The seal is dated back to 1st to 2nd century A.D. In the middle of the seal there are two parallel lines around the seal. On the top portion of the seal there is a long hole of 0.09cm. and wide of 0.03cm. The hole in the top of the seal might have been made to hang the seal in the neck like pendant during official tour. Another seal is smaller in size having Brahmic script in it. It has been taken away by Shri P.K. Mohanty, a research scholar of Deccan College, Pune.

Beads :

Semi-precious beads of different sizes and shapes are found in the upper surface of the mound. Green glass beads of diamond shape are also found. Hence glass was used in Budhigarih also.

The findings of Budhi-garh archaeological site reveal that, it was one of the oldest river valley civilizations having link with important trade centres of India in the ancient period. The potteries and wares which have the fine fabric and texture are not made of local clay. Hence, definitely such wares were being imported from the other part of the country for luxury use. Bones and fossils are encountered in surface of the mound. One broken fossil of deer horn is found. Thus Budhigarh archaeological site is one of the most important archaeological sites of India which needs to be protected for further study and research to shed light on the forgotten chapters of history.

References:
1. Puratattva - 32, p. 132, 2002
2. Ibid, P 105
4. Vincent Smith, Oxford Indian History.

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