

## THE TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF ROCK ART SOCIETY OF INDIA, RANCHI, 2015: A REPORT

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The twentieth Congress of Rock Art Society of India (RASI) organized by the State Museum, Ranchi, Govt. of Jharkhand was held at State Museum, Hotwar, Ranchi from 11th -13th December 2015. The theme of the Congress was "Rock Art of Eastern India: Recent development". Besides, there were open sessions. The Congress was attended by more than 50 delegates from 09 states viz. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhatisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.

The inaugural function of the Congress was held in the forenoon of 11th December 2015 in the State Museum Auditorium, Ranchi. Dr. Amitabh Kumar, Deputy Director cum Local Organising Secretary of the Congress delivered welcome address and made warm welcome to the delegates and guests by presenting bouquets. The Congress was started by lighting of lamp by the dignitaries (Fig.1). Prof. I.K. Chaudhury, Dr. H.S.Pandey, Prof. Giriraj Kumar (Secretary General, RASI), Shri Dilbar Bhengra (Retired Joint DG, ASI), Shri Hemsagar Naik ( Superintending Archaeologist, ASI, Ranchi Circle and Superintending Archaeologist Incharge Patna Circle) and Dr. Amitabh



Fig.1: Inauguration of the 20th RASI Congress by Lighting of a Lamp

Kumar, Deputy Director, Local Organising Secretary RASI Congress 2015 were on the dais and addressed on the occasion. Prof. Giriraj Kumar, General Secretary presented RASI report. Shri H.A. Naik addressed on the occasion. Dr. Md. Sharfuddin (Curator, State Museum, Ranchi) who played key role in planning and organising the RASI Congress at Ranchi was also present on the occasion, in spite of his illness.

Volume 25 of Purakala 2015, the Journal of Rock Art Society of India, was released in the inaugural function (Fig. 2), so also the Jharkhand's Hidden Walks, The Jharkhand we know is just the surface, Vol.1 edited by Dr. Md Sharfuddin and published by Art, Culture, Sports and youth Affairs Department, Government of Jharkhand. Then a documentary film on Huashan rock art, China was shown. Shri Shree Deo Singh (HART, ITRHD, Jharkhand) proposed the vote of thanks.

The inaugural function of the Congress was followed by the academic sessions. Academic Session-I was chaired by Shri H.A.Naik in which Dr. Col. A.K. Prasad, delivered the Key Note address of the 20th

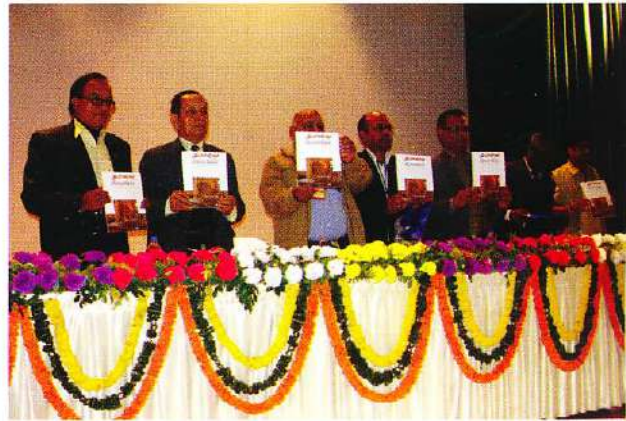


Fig.5: Release of Purakala Vol.25, 2015 by the dignitaries at the Inaugural Function of the Congress, Ranchi- 2015.



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Fig.3: General view of the participants of the 20th RASI Congress, Ranchi-2015.

RASI Congress on "Rock Art of Eastern India with special reference to Jharkhand and Bihar". Prof. S. Pradhan delivered the V.S. Wakankar Memorial Lecture of the 20th RASI Congress on, 'Interpreting Rock Art: A case study of rock art in Odisha'. Before that Shri S.B.Ota, Regional Director, ASI introduced Prof. Pradhan. Prof. A. Sundara from Karnataka chaired the session. A good number of scholars, enthusiasts and students participated in the academic deliberations of the RASI congress (Fig.3).

In the evening a cultural program was organized in the Congress venue in which the local artists performed martial art called Chhau dance, Matka dance and other folk dance and won the heart of the delegates and the guests.

Twenty eight research papers were presented in the eight academic sessions. The sessions were chaired by Shri H.A. Naik, Col A.K. Prasad, Prof A.Sundara, Prof. Sadasiba Pradhan and Dr. Prabash Sahu and co-chaired by Dr. Amitabh Kumar and Dr. Arakhita Pradhan. The rapporteurs of the sessions were Dr. Atul Kumar Pradhan, Dr. Prabash Sahu and Ms. Niharika Srivastava. The papers were debated after their presentations. Like RASI Congress, Pondicherry 2014, this year also, the paper presentations by the young scholars have outnumbered the senior scholars. A poster presentation was arranged on the Auditorium wall by RASI delegate Sai Krishna E. on New rock art findings in Gundlapochampally village, Medchal Mandal, Ranga Reddy District, Secunadarabad, Telengana.

The RASI Executive Committee Meeting was held in the afternoon on 12th December, 2015. It was presided over by Prof. A.Sundara. In the meeting it was proposed to explore the possibility of holding the next RASI Congress at Leh or Tirupati. It was also discussed in the Executive Committee to enhance the Life Member fee of RASI to Rs.8000/- from Rs.5000/- w.e.f. 1.4.2016. The General Body meeting of the Rock Art Society of India was held on 12th Dec, 2015 presided over by Prof. A. Sundara. The decisions taken by the Executive Body of RASI were approved in the meeting.

The delegates of the Congress visited the Hundru water fall in Ranchi district on 13th December 2015 forenoon. The valedictory function of the congress was held in the evening. Dr. H. S.Pandey, Prof. Giriraj Kumar, Prof. I. K.Chaudury, Prof. A. Sundara, Shri S. B. Ota, Col. A.K. Prasad and Dr. Amitabh Kumar were on the dais. In the valedictory function, Dr. H. S.Pandey proposed that a project should be made for dating the rock art of Jharkhand. The organizer felicitated the delegates by presenting a memento and certificates. Prof. Sundara, Prof. Giriraj Kumar and Shri Ota offered thanks to the organizers on behalf the delegates for the excellent arrangements of lodging, boarding and transportation made under the able leadership of Dr. Amitabh Kumar, the Local Organising Secretary, RASI Congress and also for the support of Dr. Md. Sharfuddin, Curator of State Museum, Ranchi in spite of his medical problem. It was announced on the occasion that the publication of the Proceedings of the Congress will be brought out edited by Prof. Giriraj Kumar and published by the State Museum or department of Archaeology, Ranchi, Govt. of Jharkhand. All the paper presenters were requested to send their paper in time. Shri S. D. Singh who was co-ordinating on behalf of the State Museum, Ranchi for organising the 20th RASI Congress offered Vote of thanks. The RASI Congress, Ranchi-2015 was a great success and well appreciated by the delegates and participants.

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