

REPORT ON THE 21st CONGRESS OF THE ROCK ART SOCIETY OF INDIA, TIRUPATI 16th -18th FEBRUARY, 2017

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The 21st Congress of the Rock Art Society of India was held at Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh from 16th -18th February, 2017. It was hosted by the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Sri Venkateswar University, Tirupati and sponsored by the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR).

Seventy delegates from different parts of the country and Mr E. Neumayer, a veteran scholar from Austria participated in the Congress. Nearly 40 research papers were presented in the Congress in different academic sessions which were presided over by scholars like Prof. A. Sundara, Prof. R. Korisetar, Prof. R. C. Agarwal, Prof. V. H. Sonawane, Prof. N. Chandramouli, Dr B. M. Reddy, etc. On the spot discussion while visiting the rock art sites in Kaddappa region was a great learning experience both for the senior and junior scholars. The research papers covered different aspects and issues of rock art research and conservation.

One of the important features of the congress was the keen interest shown by many young researchers who participated in the RASI Congress



Figure 1. Inauguration of the 21st RASI Congress by the Chief Guest Prof. Avula Damodaram, Vice Chancellor, S V. University, Tirupati.



Figure 2. Release of Purakala, Volume 26, 2016 by the Chief Guest and the dignitaries on the dais.

with enthusiasm and presented their papers. Even the Keynote address of the Congress was delivered by a young rock art scientist. They also participated in the academic sessions and visit to the rock art sites. The RASI congress at Tirupati created awareness among the mass which is reflected from the papers presented by many scholars from the region.

The inaugural function of the Congress was held on 16th Feb, 2017 at the Senate Hall of Sri Venkateswar University, Tirupati. The function was



Figure 3. Release of Prof. V.H. Sonawane Felicitation Volumes "Rock Art in India" edited Prof. S. Pradhan and Dr. D.B.S. Garnayaka



Figure 6



Figure



Figure 4. Prof. Ajit Kumar delivering Dr V. S. Wakankar Memorial Lecture



Figure 5. Prof. S. Pradhan introducing Shri Ram Krishna (in the center), the speaker to deliver the Keynote Address of the congress. Prof. Ravi Korisetta (in the left) chairing the session.



Figure 6. Group photo of the 21st RASI Congress participants in front of the Administrative Building of the Sri Venkateswar University, Tirupati.



Figure 7. A general view of the delegates participating in the RASI Congress, Tirupati.



Figure 8. On the spot discussion by the RASI Congress delegates and participants at Chintakunta rock art site, District Kaddapa.



Figure 9. Prof. V. Sakunthala and Prop. Giriraj Kumar discussing the issues on scientific study of rock art at Chintakunta rock art site.

inaugurated after lighting the lamp by the Chief Guest Prof. Avula Damodaram, the Vice Chancellor and other dignitaries on the dais. In the inaugural function, Prof. Avula Damodaram, Prof. V. Sakunthala, Local Organising Secretary, 21st RASI Congress and Prof. Krishana Reddy, both of the Department of Ancient Indian History Culture and Archaeology, Sri Venkateswar University, Tirupati, Prof. R. C. Agarwal, President, Rock Art Society of India and Prof. Giriraj Kumar, Secretary General, Rock Art Society of India were on the dais and addressed the audience. The RASI Journal, *Purakala* Vol. 26 was released during the function. A felicitation volume in the honour of Prof. V. H. Sonawane, entitled *Rock Art in India* edited by Prof. S. Pradhan and Dr. D. B. S. Garnayak was also released.

The Dr. V. S. Wakankar memorial lecture 2016-17 on Rock Art of Kerala was delivered by Prof. Ajit Kumar from University of Kerala. Prof. A. Sundara presided over the lecture. Prof. V. H. Sonawane introduced Prof. Ajit Kumar. The Keynote address of the Congress was delivered by young rock art scientist Shri Ram Krishna on, "Dimensions of the scientific study of cupules: Perspectives of Daraki-Chattan", while Prof. Ravi Korisetar was in the Chair. Prof. S. Pradhan introduced the speaker.

The post lunch academic session of day-1 was dedicated to the rock art of south India. It was presided over by Prof. N. Chandramouli and Dr. B. M. Reddy. The papers presented in this session covered different aspects and different parts of south India. A special lecture on "Rock art of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana region" was delivered by Prof. N. Chandramouli.

A meeting of the Executive Committee of Rock Art Society of India was held after the academic sessions of the day which was followed by a Cultural programme organised at the Auditorium of the University. In the cultural programme the classical dance of the region was performed by the local artists which was highly impressive.

The delegates of the 21st RASI Congress, students and teachers of the Department of Ancient Indian History Culture and Archaeology, Sri Venkateswar University, Tirupati in the leadership of Prof. V. Sakunthala and Prof. Krishana Reddy visited Chintakunta rock art site in Kadappa district, Andhra Pradesh on 17th February 2017 and discussed various issues of the scientific study and conservation of rock art on the site itself. Stone quarrying activities was going on at the Chintakunta rock art site at the periphery area endangering the eco system, the environment and rock art heritage of the region. It was decided during the discussions that a resolution to be passed in the valedictory function and letter to be issued to the concerned authorities to stop damage of the rock shelters. On the way to Chintakunta, the delegates also visited centrally protected monument Sri Kodanda Rama Swamy temple, Vontimitta.

On day-3, 18th February 2017 in the early hours all the delegates were taken for darshana to Sri Venkateshwara (Balaji) temple at Tirumala. The academic sessions were resumed at 10:30 am. The Congress ended with the Valedictory function. On behalf of the delegates and Rock art Society of India, Prof. R. C. Agarwal, President, Rock Art Society of India offered thanks to the local organiser, the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Sri Venkateswar University, Tirupati, authorities of the University and all the concerned for nice hospitality and well organisation of the Congress. Prof Agrawal also expressed gratitude to the authorities of the Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi for extending financial support to organise the RASI Congress, Tirupati.

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