



ARCHAEOLOGY IN ASSAM

NE

913.031954/62

CHA

P. D. CHAUDHURY

Archaeology
in
Assam

(An Introduction)

2869

P. D. CHAUDHURY, M.A., B.L.(Cal)

*Superintendent, State Department of
Archaeology, Assam, Gauhati*

&

Curator, Assam State Museum, Gauhati

with a foreword

By

Padma Bhusanam

T. N. Ramchandran, M.A., F.A.S.

*Joint-Director General of Archaeology (Retd.), Special Officer
for Archaeology, Govt. of Madras*

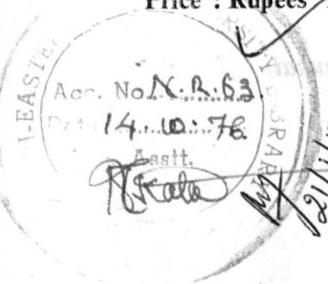
Published by
The Government of Assam in the State
Department of Archaeology, Assam,
Gauhati

Archaeology
in
Assam

Frontispiece,
A wing of the Archaeological Section,
Assam State Museum, Gauhati

Price : Rupees Three only

NE



913.031954162
CHA.

Printers :
Lakshmi Printing Press,
Panbazar, Gauhati

P. D. CHAUDHURY, M.A., B.L.S.
Superintendent State Department of
Archaeology
Gauhati
with a foreword
By
Padma Bhushan
T. N. Ramchandran, M.A., F.A.S.

F238
1179

FOREWORD

Padma Bhushanam

T. N. Ramachandran, M. A., F.A.S.

Joint-Director General of Archaeology (Retd.)

Special Officer for Archaeology

Govt. of Madras

23/31 Luz Colony

Luz Church Road

Madras—4

Date 9th Feb. '64

I was happy to go through the brochure 'ARCHAEOLOGY IN ASSAM' by Shri P. D. Chaudhury whom I had the pleasure of training in Archaeological Exploration between 1936-1940. My association with the Archaeological Survey of India, Eastern Circle gave me ample opportunities to have a fair idea of the ancient remains and archaeological sites of Assam which I visited very often in the company of Shri P. D. Chaudhury. Written in a simple style, with apt illustrations, the brochure is bound to interest both the scholar and the layman as an epitome relating to the Archaeology and History of Assam.

T. N. Ramachandran

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It gives me great pleasure to say that the Director-General of Archaeology in India has kindly conveyed his permission for the reproduction of a few photographs of monuments. My grateful thanks are due to the Archaeological Survey of India, Govt. of India for the plates (No. I to XIV, XVII & XVIII) appearing in this book.

My thanks are also due to the Govt. of Assam, Education Department, who have been pleased to accord financial sanction for the publication of this brochure.

Finally, I am indebted to my colleagues in the State Museum and State Department of Archaeology for rendering their help in the finalisation of this humble work of mine.

CONTENTS

Archaeology in Assam	1
Empire of Ashoka	2
Kamrupi Civilization	3
Assam Research Society	7
Excavations in Assam	11
A Brief History of the	12
The Koch Kings	13
The Ahom Kings	23
List of Monuments of Historical	

PREFACE

The Assam Ancient Monuments and Records Act, 1959, has been passed to provide for the preservation and protection of ancient and historical monuments and records in Assam other than those declared by or under law made by Parliament to be of National Importance. As a corollary, the **State Department of Archaeology** has come into being in 1961. This brochure has been written with a view to introducing to the readers the archaeological remains of the State which abounds in places of historical, art, and architectural monuments.

LIST OF PLATES

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Archaeology..... <i>Definition</i>	1
Enactments, <i>Central and State</i>	6
Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti or Assam Research Society	9
Reference to Archaeological Wealth	10
A Brief History of the State of Assam	16
The Koch Kings	22
The Ahom Kings	25
List of Monuments of Historical and Archaeological importance	31

LIST OF PLATES

Frontispiece : A wing of the Archaeological Section of the
State Museum, Gauhati

Back side : A view of the Assam State Museum

I Sri Suryya Pahar,	Goalpara District
II Jogighopa	" "
III Kamakhya Temple,	Kamrup District
IV Umananda and Chandrasekhar (<i>dilapidated</i>) Temples.	" "
V Poamocca	" "
VI Gachtal	Nowgong District
VII Akashi Ganga	" "
VIII Stone Door-Frame — <i>Dahparbatia,</i>	Darrang District
IX Bamuni-hill Ruins	" "
X Singri Ruins.	" "
XI Negheriting Temple.	Sibsagar District
XII Sibdol (<i>Siva Temple</i>)	" "
XIII Devidol	" "
XIV Vishnudol	" "
XV Jaysagar Ruins (<i>Palace called Talatalghar</i>)	" "
XVI Rangghar (<i>Ampitheatre</i>)	" "
XVII Gargaon Ruins (<i>Palace called Karengghar</i>)	" "
XVIII Gauri Sagar Ruins (<i>Group of Temples</i>)	" "
XIX Megaliths	K. & J. Hills District

Archaeology in Assam

(*AN INTRODUCTION*)

Archaeology is the science or study of antiquities. This department of science bears different definitions. Etymologically it is explained as a formation of the words 'Archaios' meaning 'Ancient' and 'Logos' meaning 'discourse' or 'knowledge'. But the most appropriate definition seems to be that given in Sir J. A. Hamilton's '*The Modern Encyclopaedia*.' Herein 'Archaeology' has been defined as 'Science of ancient remains'. Sree S. K. Dikshit in his '*An Introduction to Archaeology*' has rightly said that

the Vedic lore, the Bible and such other religious texts are not included in the science of archaeology. These texts are studied merely from the literary point of view. This department does not even include the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, Hiuen T'sang, Kalhana and so on. Their works are ancient and relate to history but cannot be truly called 'remains'. In short, a distinction may be drawn between the two, the 'Remains' refer to 'relics' and the old religious or historical texts to 'Records'.

By calling this subject of archaeology 'a science', great importance is attached to it. An approach towards this subject must be careful, intellectual, and well-disciplined. A haphazard approach just to satisfy one's curiosity or hobby for antiques does not amount to a study of this scientific subject.

The Asiatic Society established in Calcutta in 1784 started enquiring into the past history and literature of Asia. Archaeology in its true and literal sense formed only a humble part of the activities of this society; but any way, it was the start for taking interest in the antiquarian wealth of India and outside. John Marshall came to India in 1902 as the first Director General and, as may be well known to every archaeologist, he succeeded in the scientific organisation of the archaeological activities of this country. The observations of Sir Leonard Woolley, one of the world's leading archaeologists, excavator of Abraham's City, laid special stress

and emphasis, *inter alia*, on scientific training of young scholars in different branches of this department, and this want is now being removed by establishment of such training centres at different places of our country.

His advices for closer association and collaboration of this department with museums and universities found universal applause and acceptance. While referring to the then existing museum at Delhi, called the Central Asian Museum, Sir Leonard made a fervent plea for a central or national museum at Delhi and his ardent wishes, as we see now, have attained fruition.

The spread of Indian culture far and wide is now an established fact. Discoveries made through scientific approach have not only made this department useful from academic point of view but also helpful to a considerable extent in cementing the bond of universal brotherhood.

Methods of archaeology are manifold. This science has different branches which are rather difficult to be mastered, each demanding a lot of time and energy from a student for his mastery over it.

To be a true and real archaeologist, one must confine in himself the qualification of both a scholar and a field worker. His life is a life of activity—it is far from being an easy and restful one.

Archaeology as a science deals with the acts and achievements of the ancient life of man. It concerns with the study of the different aspects of his life in the past. It is a vast and difficult subject, not possible for a man to master all its different branches, such as, Epigraphy, Iconography, Numismatics, Excavation and so on. One will possibly do well to cling to one branch trying to get specialised and gain mastery over it. Through co-operation and good will of such specialists, healthy and beneficial results are expected to yield in the field of archaeology.

Curiously enough, there is some sort of a tendency in different countries to concentrate on different fields of activity, such as, Geology, Natural History, Anthropology, Archaeology and so on. It has been noted by Mr. Markham that in Canada and Australia geology looms large in museum collection, whereas in Ireland archaeology takes pride of place. In India, too, there is a comparable bias in favour of archaeology and historical materials. Of course, the fact remains that geology and natural history played an important part in India at the outset and it was only later that archaeology came to the fore as a result of the formation of the Archaeological Survey in 1862.

The archaeological wealth that have now come to light through the agency of this scientific survey add to world-wide interest in art and antiques.

Such discoveries of past glories stimulate a sentiment of brotherhood and foster a feeling of nationalism. In India there are really very few museums which do not contain archaeological exhibits and this is a clear evidence of appreciation of the Indian people for their ancient art and architecture.

Archaeology is very often called a dry science. It is rather difficult to create interest in a subject like this. Why should one sacrifice his present and future for the sake of the past ? The answer to such a question is very aptly met by the immortal line : 'Every present event is born of the past and is father of the future.'

Apart from such funny questions and witty answers, it is obviously meet and proper that this subject be made somewhat interesting to a common man. It is essential that the specialists should not ignore the other side, that is, the artistic aspect of this scientific subject. It is also an art, a scientific art. In matters relating to museum and works pertaining to preservation or excavation, the artistic skill of an archaeologist is indispensable. The human, rather the humanistic aspect of this subject deserves due consideration. Archaeology should be treated as a human subject, a subject of interest both for a commoner and a specialist. We have to keep in view that all over the world quite a few ancient sites of archaeological interest have come to light through tilling of grounds and chance diggings by the common people of the rural areas.

