Abstract

Khiching Sculptures – A Study In Iconography And Style

Village Khiching located on the western margin of the Simlipal massif in the central part of Mayurbhanja district in North Odisha, has yielded rich archaeological remains including a plethora of sculptures. Khiching known in ancient time as Khijjingakotta was the capital of a large kingdom called Khijjinga mandala, ruled by the Bhanja kings. It was an active socio-political cultural center from its foundation in 10th C.A.D till 1361 A.D, when it was ravaged by Firoz Shah Tughlaq’s invasion.

The sculptures are rich in iconographic variety. They represent cult images from five major Brahmanical sects – Saiva, Shakta, Vaishnava, Ganapatya and Saura as well as Jaina and Buddhist icons. Stylistically also they are matured and robust, displaying a style that set them apart. A survey of earlier works will show that though the historians and art historians, realised the importance of Khiching and praised its excellent art, but there is no exhaustive monograph dealing with them.

The sculptures of Khiching constitute a homogenous, self-sufficient school that requires definition. The iconography is varied and it is equally important to trace the sources that have moulded its style in progressive stages as well as the socio-religious information that can be gleaned from them. The aim of this PhD dissertation is to explore the iconographic variety of the site and determine the Khiching sculptures as a distinct school of art or sub-style within the broader stylistic development of early medieval Odishan art.

Rajasri Mukhopadhyay