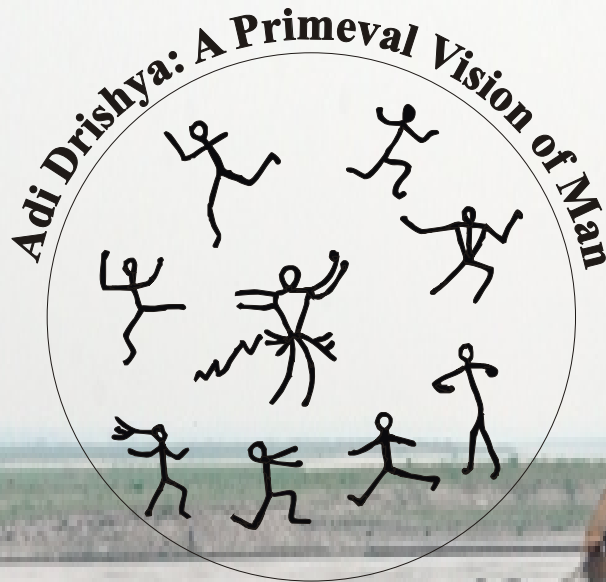


AN INTERIM REPORT ON FIRST PHASE FIELD DOCUMENTATION IN ASSAM



ROCK ART UNIT

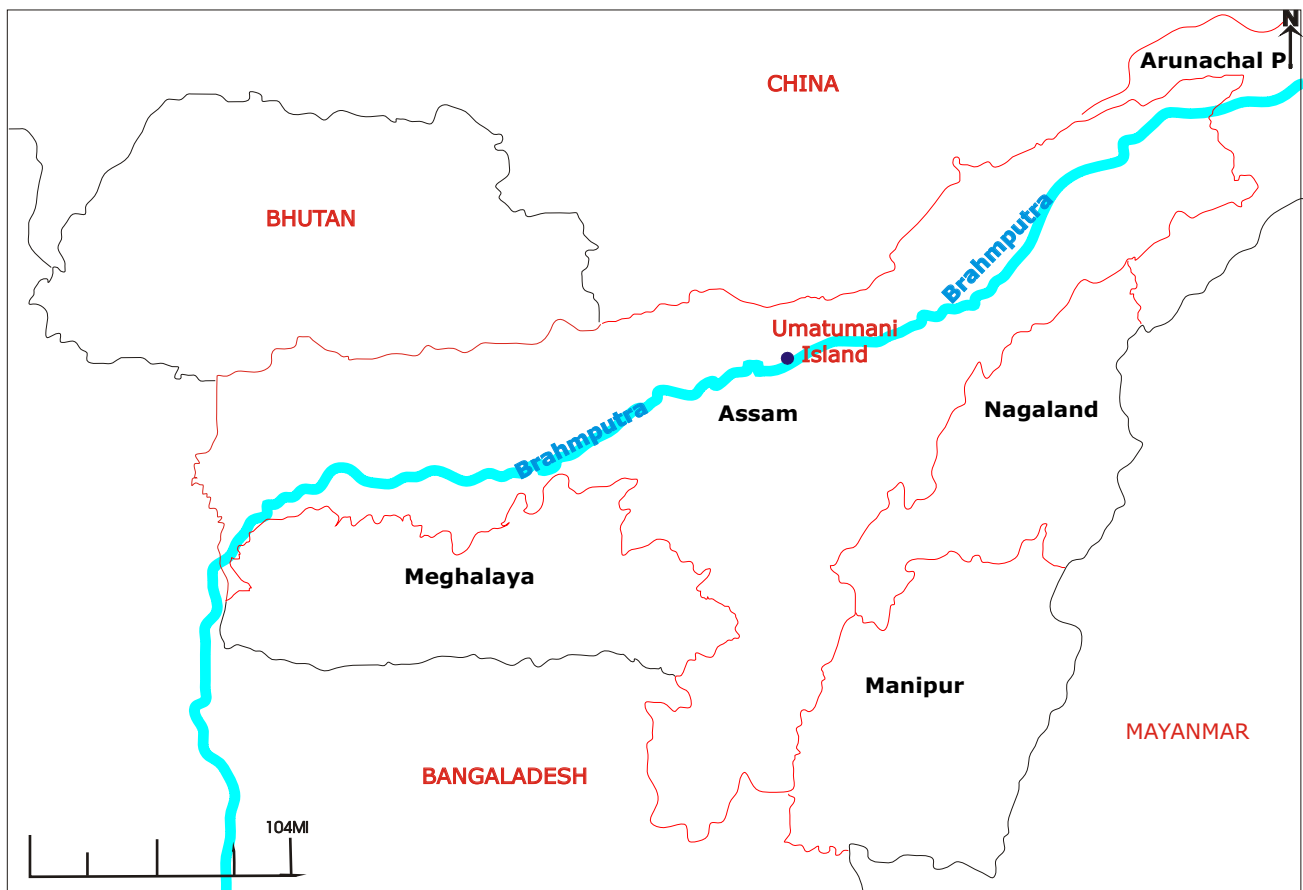


Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)
New Delhi

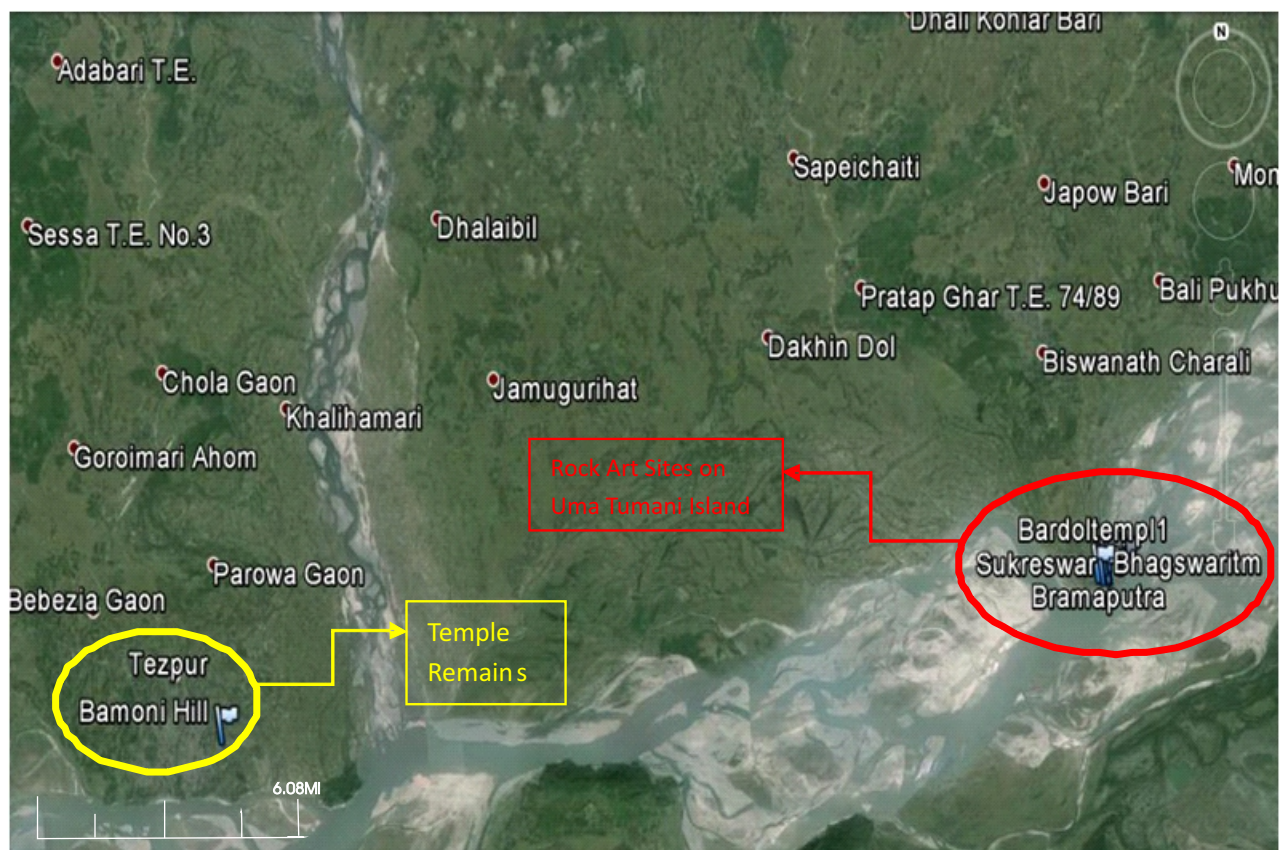
Documentation of Rock Art & Allied Subjects in Assam (Phase -I)

The first phase of documentation of rock art and its allied subject in North East states was conducted by Rock Art Unit from 3rd to 9th April, 2014 in collaboration with Department of Anthropology, Guwahati University, (GU), Guwahati. The present field work and documentation was in continuation of the Workshop on Rock Art and allied subjects in North East India held on 20.11.13 and a pilot study carried out from 12.10.13 to 19.10.13 for selection of the sites/area for the first phase. Dr. Ranbeer Singh, Project Associate, Rock Art Unit participated in the field documentation from IGNCA.

In this first phase, we covered three rock art sites- Sukreswari, Bhageswari and Nagleswari - named after a famous temple, one village - Biswanatha Ghat and two other allied sites (Pani Biswanatha Temple and Temple remains on Bohmani Hill). Except the last site - Bohmani Hill- all the sites are located in Sonitpur district of Assam, around 280 km from the Guwahati, the capital of Assam. All the sites are situated on a small island of the Brahmaputra river known as Uma Tumani, near Bishwanatha Ghat village, a popular pilgrim spot. The Bohmani hill is in Tezpur district. Sonitpur is an administrative district in the state of Assam and was created in 1983. The district headquarters are located at Tezpur.



As of 2011 it is the third most populous district of Assam (out of 27), after Nagaon and Dhubri. Geomorphic studies conclude that the Brahmaputra is a paleo-river, older than the Himalayas, which often crosses higher altitudes in the Himalayas eroding at a greater pace than the increase in the height of the mountain range to sustain its flow. The height of the surrounding regions is still increasing forming steep gorges in Arunachal. Entering Assam, the Brahmaputra becomes a braided river, and, along with its tributaries, creates the flood plain of the Brahmaputra Valley. The Brahmaputra Valley in Assam is approximately 80 to 100 km wide and almost 1000 km long. The width of the river itself is 16 km at many places within the valley.





Brief description about the sites Sukreswari

It is located on 26.39'42.8"N and Longitude: 93.10'36.4"E , Altitude: 55m amsl. The site is protected by the Archaeological Survey of India. There are four rock boulders/blocks of granite. All the rock art are engraved on a massive boulder. Despite being a Centrally Protected Site, its conservation is not satisfactory. The art form is in the form of petroglyphs and consists of nine numbers of Chessboards, three loops, one bird, one leaf, a plan of temple, an elephant and an inscription.





All these art form seems to belong to historical period. The bird which appears to be a Peacock measures 26cm in height and 34cm in width. The central and the largest Chessboard is 48cm wide and 50cm in length. The central and the largest loop measures 29cm in height and 26cm in width. About two hundred metres towards the east there is one massive block of rock and several other smaller rock blocks with engravings and other petroglyphic marks. The most significant is the design of a bird which is 72cm high and 60cm wide.

Pani Biswanatha temple

It is located around 200 metres towards West from the Sukreswari. There are some big boulders/blocks of granite in the river located on



26.39'69"N and Longitude: 93.10'50"E. It is small mound and some few temple remains lie over the mound. Local people believe, it is temple of Shiva and a hut has been built over the mound as temple and every day in the evening, village people come and pray to lord Shiva. The number of architectural remains i.e. *amlaka*, *kalasha*, sculptures, door jambs, broken pillars and door shills are scattered over the mound but due to water and sand laden wind all these architectural remains have been damaged.

Bagheswari

It is located on 26.39'54"N and Longitude: 93.10'57"E. Here, a modern temple is built near the engraved boulders/blocks. It is Hanuman temple.

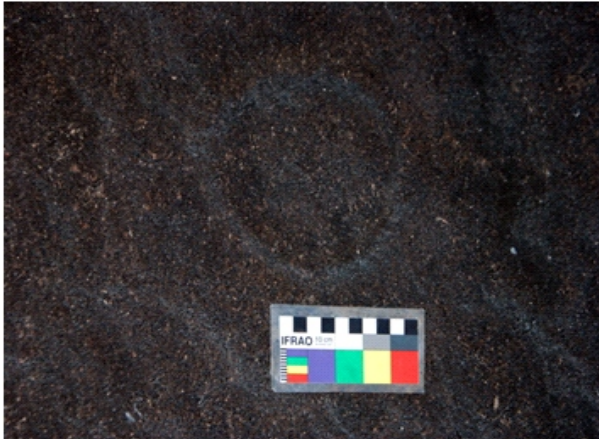


There are four boulders having engraved figures. First massive boulder near modern temple is engraved with birds, geometric designs, arrow mark and post holes, and another small boulder is decorated with few geometric designs. Two boulders towards north and around 30 mtrs from the first rock are engraved with two Hanuman figures and some cross marks.

Nagleswari

Towards North and around 1km from Sukreswari, we have two engraved boulders with depiction of birds, lotus, tantric symbol and arrow. It is

located on 26.39'65"N and Longitude: 93.10'87"E.



Bahmoli Hill

The site is protected by ASI and located on 26.37'85"N and Longitude: 92.48'75"E. in Tezpur, Assam. Temple architectural remains made on granite stone are scattered all over the mound. A beautiful image of Narshima Avatar of Lord Vishnu is lying near the *adhithana*. A beautiful decorative doorsil (*Odhumbara*) is in two broken part in the debris.



Awareness Programme

We also organised one meeting with local people from adjoining village of *Bishwanatha Ghat*. The local people have shown keen interest to

know about the remains scattered around the village. Dr. Bezbaruah briefed the villagers about the project and the importance of the remains and rock art lying in their vicinity.



Field Work Out Put

The output of this filed documentation is in the form of about 500 photographs, video and GPS data for reproducing maps for the inventory and preliminary field report.



Ranbeer Singh
Project Associate
Rock Art Unit
Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts
11 Mansingh Road
New Delhi-110001