

Important Archaeological Sites of Devadaha Village

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Rupandehi district is known as the rich land for the archaeological sites. Many archaeological sites have been found in the different part of the district (one among them is a Lumbini Garden where Siddhartha Gautam was born in 623 B.C.) This clearly attests that this area is very important for archaeological activities. Human activities started here from the pre-historic time and many civilizations developed and declined in this area in the past. Ramapithecus, which was the first species of the anatomical features of the human being, had lived in the region of Butwal and Palpa about 9.0-9.5 million year ago. The fossil of this man was discovered by an American anthropologist in 1981 A.D. Since this species has much similarities with the ancient human species, supposed to be the missing link between the apes and the first series of the hominid- the ancestors of present human being.

So we can easily accept that the human activities commenced here since the Pleistocene period. There are many sites in the district which provided some concrete information about the glory of the past of the region. Some sites are very important and they have been scientifically explored by various scholars and the Department of Archaeology, His Majesty's

Government of Nepal. There are some sites which still need scientific investigation to find out the historicity of the area. In this article the present writer would like to concentrate his investigation around the Devadaha village Development Committee where many sites are scattered and getting damaged by human encroachment. These sites are gradually declining caused by the natural and human threats. So, they need to be protected for the preservation of our age-old cultural monuments and artifacts to retain their historical glory and cultural values. Devadaha area is very important from the archaeological point of view. The writer would like to explain some important archaeological sites and their condition and situation viz, Kanyamai, Bairimai, Khayardada and Ghodaha.

Kanyamai

Kanyamai is located 1 kilometer on the south of village development committee office of Devadaha village. It is situated on the bank of a small rivulet which flows from north to south direction. There is a small mound of a ruined temple on which small temple can be seen on the top (Photo no.1). This site stretches from south to north and is surrounded by

paddy fields on the north and south. On the west there is a small vertical ditch which is used as paddy field. Some sal trees can be seen sparsely around the site. The main mound is a debris of huge stone pieces. They are there in large number and make one to guess that there might have been a temple which was fallen down in the past by some natural calamity. The stone pieces have been elaborately carved out with different motifs. There can be seen brick structure on the south of the mound which might have been built after the collapse of the stone structure. Moreover, there is a small ditch which was dug by the layman of the near by village to get treasure. The bricks are same as that from Sainamaina. So, the structure of Sainamaina and this site seem to have been built in the same period. Monolithic huge long pillars can be seen from the east side and few columns have been laid down on the center of the small rivulet. Few pottery are also found around the site which testify that there might have been a big village some time in the past. Inside the temple there are a lot of images. Among them the image of Lokeshwara is important (Photo No. 2) which has been executed in the standing posture with two hand, holding lotus flower in one of his hand and another is broken. The crown is also decorative. Hair style is simple. The height of image is 48 cm. and breadth is 28 c.m. Simple earrings, necklace and waistband can be seen on the image. The image seems little complicated and similar to those of the images of Pala period in India. Beside the image of Lokeshwara, small fragments of icons are also there which are not possible to be identified. The images which have been installed inside the temple were collected from the different part of the village in the past. The original places of the images are not known. But the style of the images proved that there might have flourished a great artistic tradition in the past in and around the area. The mound is being cut by a small rivulet gradually. Therefore, there is an urgent need of protection to save this site. The site is also being damaged by human activities and their encroachment. Last year Department of Archaeology,

His majesty's Government of Nepal fenced the site by barbed wire and with the help of Lumbini Development Trust the area of this site is also demarcated.

Bairimai

Bairimai is also an important site of Devadaha village development committee, which is situated on the north-west bank of Kairani khola, flowing north to west direction (Photo No. 3). This site is stretched to south north and fenced by barbed wired by the local people with the financial support of Lumbini Development Trust few year ago. The mound is raising gradually west to north. The Kairanikhola is cutting slowly the south part of the mound. It can be said that the mound is a debris of medieval temple. In 2052 V.S. the present writer got a chance to study this site along with his colleague. At that time he collected some decorated bricks from the bank of the river. The decorated bricks are very similar to those of the Kudan. So, the structure might have been built in the same time or little later. Dr. D.C. Regmi speculated that there might have been a big temple in the past, which had fallen or was destroyed by the human activities or natural disaster. There is the small roofed temple under which few images have been installed collected from different part of the village. Among them the broken image of Lokeshwara is important. The images are not in good state of preservation. All are broken. The styles, stone and posture of the images are similar to those of the images of Lokeshwara in Kanyamai.

Khayardada

This site is located not far from the East West National High way near the village of Devadaha. The site is covered by the sal trees (Photo No. 4). It stretches north to south. East west length of the site is shorter than the north south. The site is very important for the archaeological point of view. Three important mound are seen in the middle of the site. All the mounds have been noted full of burnt bricks. The southern most mound is smaller than the other

and on the top it has been dug by the people that is why the mound is less safe than the other. Similarly the mound seems to be the ruins of temple. There might have been a temple in the past. The layman of the near by village regards the sites as a Buddhist monuments. The mound is being suffered by the encroachment problem. The south corner of the mound has been occupied by the migrants of hilly region. The another important mound is situated on the north corner of the site. It has been completely destroyed by the human activities. The people of the near by villages usually try to hunt treasure during night expecting valuable treasure left by their forefathers. The spade mark can be still seen there on the top of the mound. At present, the mound is sparsely covered with the sal bushes. This site also looks like a debris of temple. The burnt bricks of the site are similar to those of the bricks of Sainamaina and Kudan. The structure clearly elucidates that there might have been a temple at this place in the medieval period and this area seems to have been in the dominion of Sen of Palpa. It can be presumed that on the east of the site there was a small village in the past. The wells, bricks fragment, icons and various structures which existed around the village clearly make a ground to presume that there was a developed village where people built buildings. The fragmented images in these temple were scattered in the different part of village and seems later collected and deposited there. Then people started to venerate them and worship.

If we analyze the surrounding subtly then only truth will come out. The third mound lies very near to the south corner of the second mound. Small pieces of burnt bricks are scattered around the mound. The small path, which has been built recently, has damaged the east portion of the mound. This is also the foundation of a small temple, which rises upward slowly. This mound might have connection with the mound of the south corner.

Khayardada, which seems very important for archaeological research where people used to come for sectarian practice in the past. This site is safer than the other existed sites around the village. There is no problem of encroachment by the people from west,

north and east but the south corner is being suffered by encroachment problem. So there is the need of a barbed fence to stop human activities around the site. Last year the team consisting the officials of LTD and DOA demarcated the site from all direction. The icons, burnt bricks and pottery, which are found on the ground, seem to be the work of 15th or 16th centuries A.D. So the sites are not older than the 15th centuries A.D. To reveal its real history the site is waiting the tools of an archaeologist.

Ghodaha

This site is located to the North of National Highway near Devadaha village. It is also an important site for archaeological activities. In 1998 strange type of burnt bricks were found when a well was dug. The bricks possessed unique uneven lines which is a special feature of these bricks (Photo No. 5). Likewise, the bricks are more bigger in size than those found in this region. The Site is being used by the hilly migrants as a agricultural field and the area is crowded day by day. Some bricks, which were discovered from the site have been kept in the office of village development committee. The bricks, which are found from this site, should be studied thoroughly and if needed, small trial trench can be taken to find out a historicity of the site. This site is slowly destroyed by the human activities and natural movement. So, to reveal the mystery of the site urgent exploration and rescue excavation should be conducted to know the reality and archaeological importance of this site. This site is also demarcated in all direction with the joint effort of LTD and DOA Personals.

All the above mentioned sites have been situated around the Devadaha village development committee and they are expecting scientific exploration and proper analysis. Beside these sites, the whole village area is equally important because pieces of pottery, fragment of icons, burnt bricks and mark of well are found at many places which make a ground to assume that there was a rich civilization hidden under ground.



Photo No. 1



Photo No. 2



Photo No. 3



Photo No. 4

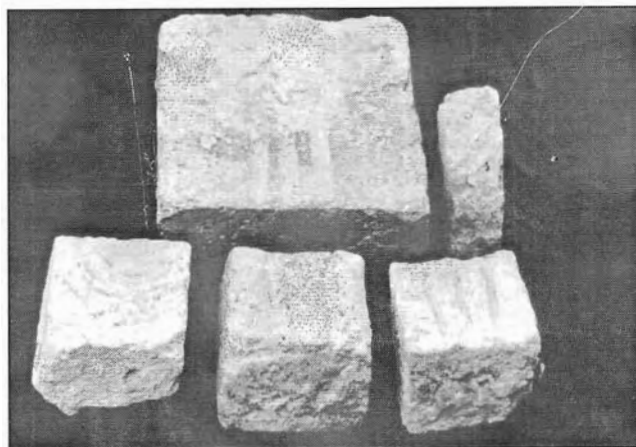


Photo No. 5