

भारत इतिहास संशोधक मंडळ, पुणे

त्रैमासिक

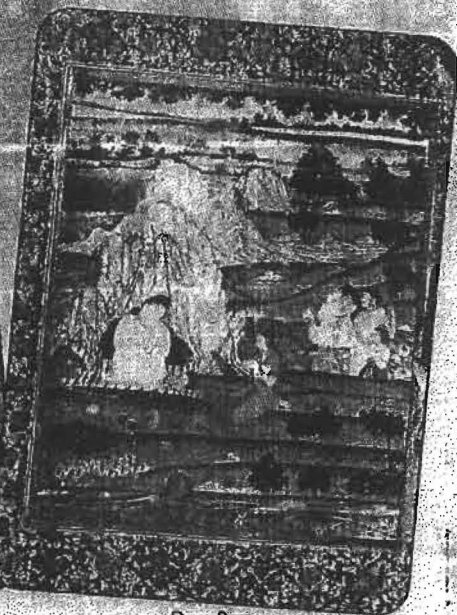
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7. Memorial Stone - The Symbol of Valour

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In Modern times a soldier who exhibits exemplary valour with a Shauryachya Medal of Honour. In the Medieval ages the valor exhibited by an individual was symbolised in the form of the Hero Stone. Many such Hero Stone of various types can be seen in our around temples, forts, outskirts or special museum at Malshiras, Akhuj, Khudus and Piliv in the Solapur district. A Hero Stone is a slab erected in the memory of the dead brave hearts. The religion of the brave expect them to accept death required. This is proved by the Veeerkavyas (elegies to the brave) of Literature. These who get killed by a weapon during a war are believed to attain heaven. The eternal memorial erected in their honour is known as the Hero Stone(1) The Eleventh Shloka in the twenty-sixth chapter of Streecanto or the Mahabhartta states that an individual who is killed by a weapon goes to the Yakshaloka. The Malshiras Taluka has different types of Hero Stones. For example the brave who lost their lives while averting the attacks on live stocks, those killed in war, those who sacrificed their lives martyrs, the women who became Satis (immolated themselves on the funeral pyres of husbands) have all been immortalised in the Hero Stones which have made the history of Solapur in Medieval ages very striking.

The Yadav regime that witnessed progress in every field of life met its end in 1318 from then on to the establishment of the Bahamani empire, the Malshiras taluka spent almost so year without an emperor. This prompted many citizens to turn to agriculture instead of military service. Agriculture supplemented with cattle breeding became a common occupation. This further led to the need of protecting cattle waging wars for them as also succumbing to death in war. This taluka therefore has many Hero Stones bearing animal motifs.

Hero Stones with animal motifs: The political instability after the downfall of the yadavas gave rise to agriculture and supply mentary cattle breeding in the Malshiras region. Farmer had to bear the responsibility of protecting cows, buffalows, sheep and goat. In the Medieval ages many wars for the protection of live stocks must have been fought in this region since any Hero Stones are found in the memory of the Soldiers who lost their lives in such wars. Many Hero

Stones with animal motifs are found in the vicinity of the Maruti Temple at Khudas in this Taluka. The bottom panel on this slab depicts their heads of animals with a dead human body underneath(2). The second panel shows Apsaras arriving to carry the dead warrior to heaven. In the third panel this warriors seems to have arrived in heaven and seated himself before the Linga of Shiv. This implies that warrior who died protecting the live stock attained heaven and Hero Stones was erected in Velapur. Many such Hero Stones are also preserved in the museum at Velapur. Among them is a huge hero stone depicting the attack for stealing live stock. This Hero Stones depicted the invasion on an entire village which is plundered and all the cows, buffalows, sheep and goats carried away. Such wars were rampant in many villages between the 14th and 16th Century. This is why this region abounds in Hero Stones. This was made evident in the field survey.

Hero Stones in honour of the brave who lost lives in the war to depend village: Warfare was a permanent feature of life in the Medieval ages. Invading kingdoms plundering villages stealing away harvests stealing away live stock and harassing women and girls was very rampant. This gave rise to the custom of building fencing around village. The invasion on villages however continued, Innumerable Hero Stones erected in the honour of the brave soldiers who died fighting the enemy are found all over this Taluka. These Hero Stones display a typical pattern. They are made up of 3 or 5 panels. The lowest panel depicts the scene of the war whether of infantry, cavalry or elephant riders. In case of bigger invasion the generals or rulers are seen seated in canopies atop elephants. The second panel depicts Apsaras carrying the brave warrior to heaven while the third panel is a scene of attainment of heaven. In the 5 panelled Hero Stones the war scene covers 2 other panel. The Hero Stones at Malshiras and museum at Velapur are 4 side memorial(3) The carving on 4 sides implies 4 different wars of a place or 4 different wars fought by a signal soldiers. A Hero Stone located on the outskirts of Malshiras is 6 panelled (4). This is memorial erected for two brave soldiers of a family who sacrificed their lives while defending their brother. It has 6 shorter panels with the typical scenes. It has been created on a Stone slit vertically(5) Apart from these three are other Hero Stones constructed in the memory of Dandanayakas (General of the army)

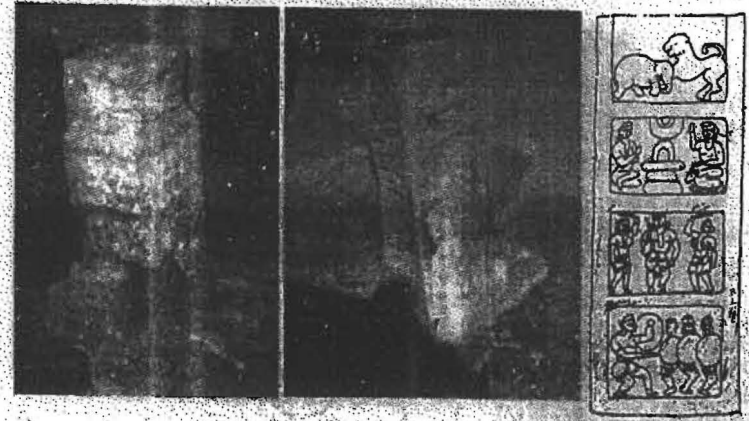
The Satis slab: The practice of women embracing death on the funeral pyres of husbands was prevalent in the Medieval ages. Such Hero Stones are found in temple complexes or on the outskirts of villages all over Solapur district. On these slabs one or two hands are carved at right angle implying the act of sati (6). Two figures representing the couple are carved between motifs of sun and the moon are carved on top implying the eternity of the women's glory. The memorial of the Medieval ages. Thus present themselves in the form of Hero Stones. They are a testimony to the anecdotes of bravery and valours as exhibited at different places. They are mute and do not communicate anything verbally. But the engravings on them serve as direct interference on historical facts.

References:

- 1) Memorial Stone, Gather D. Sontheimer, page 18
- 2) See plate no. 1
- 3) See plate no. 2
- 4) See plate no. 3
- 5) See plate no. 4
- 6) See plate no. 5



प्लेट क्र. २, खुडस येथील पशुनिर्देशक वीरगळ

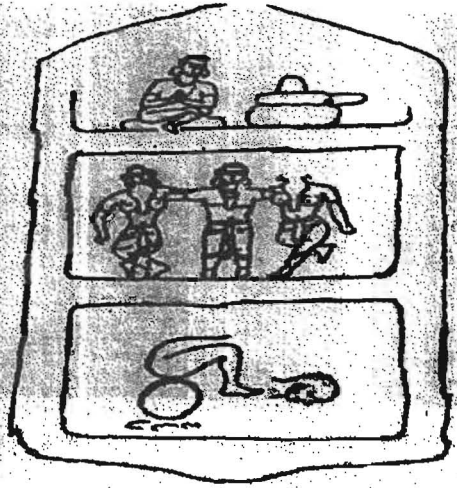


प्लेट क्र. ३, मेकापूर संग्रहालयातील चारखाणी वीरगळ

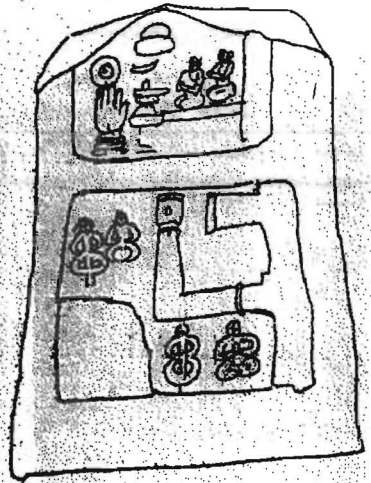
प्लेट क्र. ४, माकशिरसमधील चारखाणी वीरगळ



प्लेट क्र. ४, माकशिरसमधील सहाखाणी वीरगळ



प्लेट क्र. ५, आत्मबलिदान वीरगळ



प्लेट क्र. ६, एक सती स्टेन, अकालुज