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REVIEW ARTICLE

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NEWLY DISCOVERED MEGALITHIC CULTURE BURIALS AT KATTIGEHALLI VILLAGE OF DAVANGERE DISTRICT, KARNATAKA

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ABSTRACT

The megalithic cultural remains are a major topic of research all around the world. The monuments associated with the culture show innumerable variety in types and chronology. Many ancient beliefs and practices can be read from the tangible remains found from the megaliths and juxtaposing them with some of the ethnic practices related to the dead vogue today. It is not only that the belief in the life after death is reflected in the burials, but it is also observable that the megalithic monuments are considered to be representing various beliefs related to ancestor worship, fear or respect towards the dead and belief in soul, spirit and ghost etc. Megalithic belief and practices are associated with the installation of variety of burial monuments, and megalithism attains the expression of a religion. This paper tries to assess about practices and beliefs associated with megalithic culture in India.

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INTRODUCTION

The megalithic cultural remains are a major topic of research all around the world. The monuments associated with the culture show innumerable variety in types and chronology. Many ancient beliefs and practices can be read from the tangible remains found from the megaliths and juxtaposing them with some of the ethnic practices related to the dead vogue today. It is not only that the belief in the life after death is reflected in the burials, but it is also observable that the megalithic monuments are considered to be representing various beliefs related to ancestor worship, fear or respect towards the dead and belief in soul, spirit and ghost etc. Megalithic belief and practices are associated with the installation of variety of burial monuments, and megalithism attains the expression of a religion. This paper tries to assess about practices and beliefs associated with megalithic culture in India. The period after the Chalcolithic Age is called the Megalithic Age or Iron Age by scholars. The people of this culture built large stone tombs of interesting and different types, so it is customary to call that period the Megalithic Age culture. The iron plowshares, sickles, spears, shovels, swords, and axes made by humans at this stage indicate that they were engaged in activities such as hunting

and agriculture. This change made it possible to achieve greater progress in agriculture than in the Neolithic Age and to build large stone tombs. Animals such as oxen, buffaloes, goats, sheep, chickens, horses, and dogs were domesticated in large quantities by humans during this period. In addition, spinning with a spinning wheel, weaving mats, and black and red, single- and double-colored earthenware pots reveal the lifestyle of the Megalithic people. In 1823, Babington discovered the remains of this culture for the first time in India in the coastal region of the state of Kerala. Since then, many researchers have discovered numerous sites in various parts of the country. Especially in the states of South India, the sites of this culture have come to light. Through this, they have shed light on the residential system, social and economic life of the people of the Megalithic Age culture. Megalithic graves have been found in all districts, including the Uttara Kannada district of the state of Karnataka. The sites of this culture have been found mostly in the limestone and granite hill areas of the state. Therefore, wherever the Megalithic Age man lived, there is a large area at the foot of the hills. Many large Stone Age sites have come to light in the vicinity of Davanagere district in Karnataka.



The hilly environment adjacent to the Kattigehalli site



First stone circle burial

Second stone circle burial



Third stone circle burial

Fourth stone circle burial



The destroyed fifth and sixth stone circle burials

The Nyamathi and Komaranahalli sites were discovered in the survey conducted in the district by Robert Bruce Foot, the father of prehistoric history, in 1916. The Komaranahalli site discovered by Robert Bruce Foot was excavated by M. S. Nagaraj Rao in 1978 and its report was published. Professor S. Y. Somashekar discovered the Akanur site in 1997. Thus, as a result of many scholarly studies, more than 34 large Stone Age sites have been discovered in Davanagere district. Out of these, 19 are residential sites, while 15 sites with various types of stone tombs such as stone circles, kalmanes, nilasugallu, swastikas and flat-shaped bedrock have been found. Remains of black, polished black and red colored pottery have been found at Didaguru, Bannikode, Benakanahalli, Sasivehalli, Halelingapura, Hosahalli, Suragondanakoppa in Honnali taluk of Davangere district. At Akanur, Sangenahalli, Tamalenahalli in Jagalur taluk and Kokkanur, Tamminakatte in Harihar taluk, and at Kammaragatte, Chinnikate, Belimallur, Siddapura, Sunkadakatte, Savalanga, Hanumanahalli, Haraganahalli, Hadonahalli in Honnali taluk. Benakanahalli, Nilogal in Betta in Channagiri taluk. Guheshwaragudda, Malemachikere, Asagodu, Kanakuppe in Jagalur taluk. Komaranahalli in Harihar taluk and Doddabathi in Davangere taluk are the important burial sites. If we look at the mentioned sites, it is seen that the environment of Davangere district was a suitable place for the habitation of the Neolithic people.

In the present article, the newly discovered stone circle tombs in Kattigehalli of Jagalur taluk of Davangere district are studied. Kattigehalli village is about 19 km. away from Jagalur taluk and is on the left bank of the Jeenigihalla river. A hill range covered with soil is found to the west of Kattigehalli village. This hill extends towards the north and south. This hill is locally known as Gosappana Betta. This hill slopes towards the east and is spread over an area of about 500 hectares. This area of red mixed black soil is covered with undulating valleys and is a vast forest area with scrub trees. There is a dinne area parallel to the middle of the hill. It is called by the locals as Moriyar Palu, the place where the Pandavas lived. More than 10 stone circle tombs were found at this place during the field work. Some tombs are in good condition, while others are in disrepair. All the burials were covered with trees. The trees that did grow on the burials were cut down and studied in the present article. The first burial is 960 cm. in diameter and 480 cm. in radius in east-west and north-south directions and is circular. There are 21 black granite stones of a certain size around the burial. There are stones only on the northern side of the burial, the stones on the southern side are not visible. Perhaps the locals have taken the stones here for their work. But the central part of the burial is seen to be in good condition.

A second burial is found in this site, adjacent to the first burial. This burial is 930 cm. in diameter and 465 cm. in radius in east-west and north-south and is circular in shape. There are 8 separate black granite stones of a certain size around the burial. No remaining stones that may have been in this burial are visible. But the burial is in good condition. A third burial is found at a short distance downstream from the second burial. This burial is 1020 cm. in diameter and 510 cm. in radius in east-west and north-south directions and is circular. There are 40 black granite stones of a specific size around the burial. This burial is in good condition in all respects in this site. The fourth burial, which seems to be adjacent to the third burial, is filled with plants. This burial is 900 cm. in diameter and 450 cm. in radius in the east-west and north-south directions and is circular. There are 12 black granite stones of a certain size around the burial. Many years ago, the soil has been removed in the center of this burial. Therefore, the center of this burial is pitted. The fifth and sixth burials are located on the same site, and they are completely ruined. That is, the stones that were placed around the burials are not visible. Only small stones are visible. The center of the burials is seen to be in good condition. There are some other stone circle burials on the same site, but they are completely ruined. All the graves in this site are circular. Black granite stones of a specific size have been used for them. Since granite stones are abundant in the hilly environment of this site, it is likely that humans used that stone for the graves, which was easily available. No other traces of the Megalithic culture such as iron tools, pottery shards, beads, etc. have been found in this site. Overall, the Kattigehalli site is also worth excavation from the point of view of knowing more details about the Megalithic culture.

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