

# Malinithan

Prepared by: Dhanya Ram Roy

**Malinithan** is an archaeological site which consists of ruins of a Hindu temple of the early medieval period on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra River in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. The archaeological studies of the ruins indicate that the temple was built with granite stones during the period of Hinduism influence in the region. It was built by Chutiya kings in the 13th-14th century. Kechai-Khaiti, a Chutia tribal goddess was believed to be the chief deity who was worshipped in the ruined temple. The location of a narrow stream named Akashiganga similar to the site of Tamreswari and Bura-Buri Temples of Sadiya indicates that sacrifices were once performed in the temple.

# Location

- The Malinithan archaeological site is located at the base of the Siang mountains in the Likabali town and a sub-division of the Lower Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. It is situated on a hill that rises to a height of 21 metres (69 ft), which affords a commanding view of the plains around it and of the Brahmaputra River.

# Legend

- The site was discovered during British Raj times and since then mythology has been fabricated for the site.
- As per this mythology, it is said that when Krishna wanted to marry Rukmini, the daughter of King Bhishmaka of Vidarbha, he abducted her prior to her wedding with Shishupala. Krishna and Rukmini then travelled from Bhishmakanagar to Dwarka, stopping at Malinithan on the way over, where they were guests of Shiva and Durga, who were doing penance. Parvati, Shiva's consort, warmly welcoming her guests, presented them with garlands made of flowers plucked from her orchard. Krishna was so enamoured by the beauty and the scent of the flowers that he addressed Parvati as Malini, meaning "the mistress of the garden", and since then the place is named as Malinithan.<sup>1</sup>

# History

- The archaeological finds at the site of sculptures of Durga, a Shiva linga and a bull, the mount of Shiva, relate to worship by people of the Shiva cult. Based on these, archaeologists have inferred that the Shakti cult was practised in the region. It was one of the three leading centers of Shaktism; the other two centers are stated to be Bhaghawati, the mother goddess at Gorehoga village in North Lakhimpur, and Harhithan in Dhakuakhana in the west end Tamresari in the east.

# Features

- The archaeological excavations revealed a very well designed and carved plinth of a temple, of 8 feet (2.4 m) height, sculptures of deities and animals, designs of flowers, damaged columns and panels. Four sculptures of lions on two elephants were found at the four corners of the ruins of the temple.
- Among the sculptures found at Malinthan, five notable ones carved out of granite stone are of [Indra](#) riding his mount [Airavata](#), [Kartikeya](#) riding a peacock, [Surya](#) (Sun) riding a chariot, and [Ganesha](#) mounted over a mouse, and a large [Nandi bull](#).<sup>[8]</sup> On the basis of the erotic [Maithuna](#) sculptures found here in different postures it is believed that [tantricism](#) prevailed here as a fertility rite of the primitive tribal people who held the "mother principal as the procreative power of nature".
- The temple is carved entirely out of stone, a type of temple known as *Asmamayai*. Iron dowels discovered in the ruins of the stone temple which resemble the ones found in the Tamreswari temple of Sadiya shows that it was built by the same people.

# Ruins of Malinithan temple



# Malinithan temple complex



Malinithan Mother goddess sculpture,  
Gaja-singha of Malinithan,  
Malinithan Shiva sculpture,  
Malinithan Kartika sculpture,  
Malinithan Apsara sculpture





Thank you