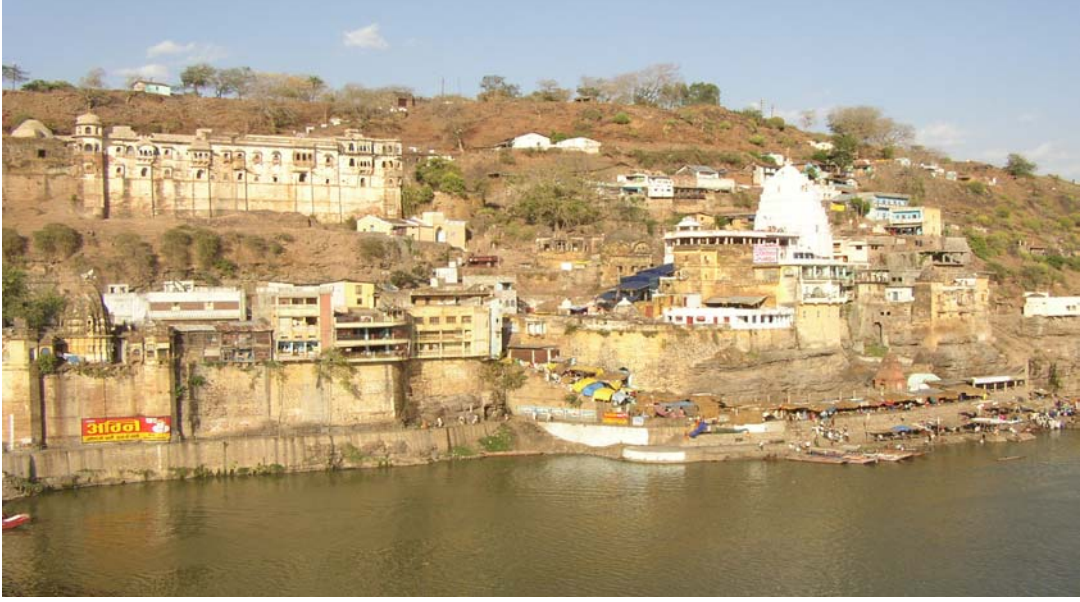


Omkāra Māndhātā Mukti Dhāma

A Paradise for Pilgrims¹



We would like to begin this “Sourcebook” with the *maṅgalācaraṇa* (benedictory verses) of the Māndhātā Grant of the Paramāra King Jayasiṃha—Jayavarman, V.S. 1331 (1274 A.D.):

[ओंकारेश्वरमहिमा]

देवानां वेदानां त्रयस्य यो जातवेदसां जगताम् ।
लेभे नामादिम ॐ इति नमामि देवं तमोंकारम् ² ॥ ६ ॥

शम्भोरम्भोभिरस्य स्नपनविधिवशादप्यहं मूर्धनि द्वे
सन्धाने संविधास्ये ध्रुवमिति विधुरा स्वर्धुनीस्पर्धयेव ॥

¹ Could we name our enterprise as Omkara Mandhata—A Paradise for Pilgrims 10-8-01
We named it so. It could be also rendered as Omkāra Māndhātā Dhāma Mahimā.

² Māndhātā Plates of Paramāra Jayasiṃha-Jayavarman, 1274 A.D. *Epigraphica Indica*, 32:139ff. It is to be remembered that this valuable ancient record was just a chance find. The editor says: “This inscription is said to have been discovered in 1927 at Māndhātā on the southern bank of the Narmadā, when some people were clearing the ground near the Kāśī-Viśveśvara temple for the Kārtikī Melā.” Another copper-plate inscription of equal value was found just by chance when some repairs were being carried out at or near the Siddhanātha temple on the top of the Māndhātā Hill. What a fortuitous find!

रेवा सेवानुषङ्गादिव चरणतलालम्बिनी यस्य भाति
प्रासादोऽभ्रंलिहश्रीर्जयति पशुपतेः सोऽयमोंकारनाम्नः ॥ ७ ॥

यत्प्रासादाग्रकलश-ताडितपूरा सुरापगा मुखरा ।
रेवानुषङ्गरोषादिव गङ्गाधरमुपालभते ॥ ८ ॥

नो गम्यो यमकिङ्करैर्न दुरितैरासादनीयो न वा
धृष्यो मोहमहोर्मिभिर्न कलिना चैष प्रवेष्टुं क्षमः ॥
मत्त्वा कुण्डलनामिवेति परितः संप्रापितो रेवया
कावेर्या³ च पितामहेन⁴ सुमहान् मान्धातृधात्रीधरः ॥ ९ ॥

It is really remarkable to realize that deeply profound and highly honored homage is offered here to OM: One God Universal in these benedictory verses (*maṅgalācaraṇa*). The phrase “**Namāmi Devam tam Omkāram**” could be applied to the presiding deity as well. Also the name of the deity is given as Omkāra. Moreover, notable is the term “**Māndhātṛdhātṛīdharah**,” giving great honor to the Mount Māndhātā.

It is also noteworthy that the mass of water flowing to the north side of the Mount Māndhātā was called Kāverī even at the time when the inscription in reference was composed [1331 V.S.] Yet, this is a controversial matter. There must be some reason why this name was given to the water of the Narmadā itself flowing to the north side of Mount Māndhātā Island. Forsyth calls the naming as “so called.”

Maybe those pious people who built the temples on the north side had some special attachment to the great Kāverī River of the Deep South. Let it also be noted that the Skanda Purāṇa pays great homage to the confluence of Narmadā and Kāverī here, narrating the story of the **tapas** by Kubera, who was only a yaksha to begin with, but who became the Yaksharāja as a boon of performing the tapas here.

Shri Ramaprasada Shastri of Khetdi writes in his *Śiva-Tattva-Darśana* (pp. 95 ff.):

³ On कावेर्या by the editor D.C. Sircar: “This is the name of a northern branch of the Narmadā (Revā) near Māndhātā (compared with the epic King bearing the same name) where the Omkāreśvara temple stands”. [A unique interpretation.]

⁴ By the Creator Lord.

Oṃkāreśvara, Amaleśvara, athavā Oṃkāreśvara Māndhātā

The heading itself is significant enough. It tells quite a lot in a few words. Referring to the *Śivapurāṇa*, Shastri says that the holy view of Oṃkāreśvara and Amaleśvara generates great virtue. And so does the holy dip in the pious river Narmadā. Not by a bath necessarily, but even a holy view of Narmadā brings great virtue.



Skanda Purāṇa begins its Revā Khaṇḍa with the following maṅgalācaraṇa, offering great regard and respect to the pious River Narmadā:

ॐ मञ्जन्मातङ्गगण्डच्युतमदमदिरामोदमत्तालिमालं
स्नानैः सिद्धाङ्गनानां कुचयुगविगलत्कुङ्कुमासङ्गपिङ्गम् ।
सायं प्रातर्मुनीनां कुसुमचयसमाच्छन्नतीरस्थवृक्षम्
पायाद् वो नर्मदाम्भः करिमकरकराक्रान्तरंहस्तरङ्गम् ॥ १ ॥

उभयतटपुण्यतीर्था प्रक्षालितसकललोकदुरितौघा ।
देवमुनिमनुजवन्द्या हरतु सदा नर्मदा दुरितम् ॥ २ ॥

नाशयतु दुरितमखिलं भूतं भव्यं भवच्च भुवि भविनाम् ।
सकलपवित्रितवसुधा पुण्यजला नर्मदा भवति ! ॥ ३ ॥

तटपुलिनं शिवदेवा यस्या यतयोऽपि कामयन्ते वा ।
मुनिनिवहविहितसेवा शिवाय मम जायतां रेवा ॥ ४ ॥

Here is an authentic citation and glorification of Omkāreśvara from the

सौर--पुराण 6: 15-18

पुनर्जगाम भगवान्⁵ ओंकारेध्वरमीध्वरम् ।
स्मरणाद्यस्य लिङ्गस्य मुच्यते सर्वपातकैः ॥ १५ ॥
यत्र साक्षाच्छिवः सूक्ष्मो नित्यं तिष्ठति वै द्विजाः ।
अनुग्रहाय लोकानां पशुपाशविमोचकः ॥ १६ ॥
यत्र पाशुपताः सिद्धा ओंकारेध्वरमीध्वरम्⁶ ।
संपूज्य परमां सिद्धिं प्राप्नुवन्तो द्विजोत्तमाः ॥ १७ ॥

कृष्णपक्षे चतुर्दश्यां [महाशिवरात्रि ?] तस्मिंस्त्रिङ्ग उपोषितः ।
यदि जागरणं कुर्यात् परां सिद्धिमवाप्नुयात्⁷ ॥ १८ ॥

And here is a hymn attributed to Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda:

कावेरिकानर्मदयोः पवित्रे समागमे सञ्जनतारणाय ॥
सदैव मान्धातृपुरे वसन्तमोङ्कारमीशं शिवमेकमीडे⁸ ॥ ४ ॥

* * *

अथ श्रीस्कान्दे महापुराणे एकाशीतिसाहस्र्यां संहितायां
पञ्चमेऽवन्तीखण्डे
चतुरशीतिलिङ्गमाहात्म्ये ॐकारेध्वरमाहात्म्यवर्णनं नाम
द्विपञ्चाशत्तमोऽध्यायः ॥ ५२ ॥

⁵ व्यासः सत्यवतीसुतः ।

⁶ Note the consistent use of the singular number.

⁷ सौरपुराण 6: 15-18.

⁸ This verse is quite significant. It does not bring the name of Amareshwara, etc. It gives the location as well and says "One". There is great deal of controversy on the question whether there is only one Jyotirlinga or two. The booklet published by Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga Temple Trust called *Omkareshwar Darshanika* ascribes this hymn to Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya. If true, quite significant.

ओङ्कारेश्वरमाहात्म्यवर्णनम्

श्री विद्मेश्वर उवाच

द्व्यधिकं देवि जानीहि पञ्चाशत्तममीश्वरम् ।
 ओङ्कारेश्वर इत्याख्या यस्यास्ति भुवनत्रये ॥ १ ॥
 प्राकृते कल्पसंज्ञे तु प्रथमे प्रथमं मया ।
 वक्त्रादुत्पादितो देवि पुरुषः कपिलाकृतिः ॥ २ ॥
 तः स पुरुषो दिव्यः किं करोमीत्युपस्थितः ।
 विभजात्मानमित्युक्तो मयान्तर्धानगोऽभवत् ॥ ३ ॥
 निर्वाणस्येव दीपस्य गतिस्तस्य न लक्षिता ।
 ततस्तस्याभवच्चिन्ता कथमात्मा विभज्यते ॥ ४ ॥
 एवं चिंतयतस्तस्य चतुर्मित्योत्थितस्ततः ।
 त्रिवर्णस्वरूपी च चतुर्वर्गफलप्रदः ॥ ५ ॥
 ऋग्यजुःसामनामा च ब्रह्मविष्णुशिवात्मकः ।
 व्याप्नुवन्सकलाल्लोकान्प्रभावैः पृथुभिस्तदा ॥ ६ ॥
 ओङ्कार इति तस्याख्या मया दत्ता प्रसादतः ।
 तदोक्ताभिरुदाराभिर्वाणीभिः समलङ्कितः ॥ ७ ॥
 हृदयात्तस्य देवस्य वषट्कारः समुत्थितः ।
 छन्दसां प्रवरा देवि! चतुर्विंशक्षरा परा ॥ ८ ॥
 षट्कुक्षिः सा त्रिपादा च पञ्चशीर्षोपलक्षिता ।
 समीपवर्त्तिनी देवी पार्श्वे तत्र व्यवस्थिता ॥ ९ ॥
 गायत्री मधुरा भाषा सावित्री लोकविश्रुता ।
 स चोङ्कारो मया प्रोक्तो गायत्र्या सह पार्वति ।
 सृष्टिं कुरु ममादेशाद्विचित्रामनया सह ॥ १० ॥
 इत्युक्तस्त्रिशिखो भूत्वा हिरण्यसदृशाकृतिः ॥
 सृष्टिमुत्पादयामास स्वशरीरान्ममाऽऽज्ञया ॥ ११ ॥
 पूर्वं देवगणाश्चैव त्रयस्त्रिंशच्च देवताः ।
 मनुष्या ऋषयश्चैव वेदप्रामाण्यतः कृताः ॥ १२ ॥
 तेषां देहे प्रविष्टानां प्रादुर्भावः पुनर्भवेत् ।
 यथा सूर्यस्य सततमुदयास्तमनं भवेत् ॥ १३ ॥
 संहृत्योङ्कारमखिलान् सदेवासुरपन्नगान्

कृतात्मगर्भे भगवानोङ्कारो जगतः प्रभुः ॥ १४ ॥
ससर्ज सर्वभूतानि कल्पान्ते पर्वतात्मजे ।
अव्यक्तः शाश्वतश्चैव तस्य सर्वमिदं जगत् ॥ १५ ॥
कर्त्ता चैव विकर्त्ता च संहर्त्ता च महास्तु यः ।
ओंकारपूर्वका वेदा यज्ञाश्चोंकारपूर्वकाः ॥ १६ ॥
ओंकारपूर्वकं ज्ञानं तपश्चोंङ्कारपूर्वकम् ।
स्वयम्भूरिति विज्ञेयः स ब्रह्मा भुवनाधिपः ॥ १७ ॥
स वायुरिति विज्ञेयः सर्वज्ञः स प्रजाकरः ।
विध्वेदेवास्तथा साध्या रुद्रादित्यास्तथाऽद्विनौ ॥ १८ ॥
प्रजानां पतयश्चैव सप्त चैव महर्षयः ।
वसवोऽप्सरसश्चैव गन्धर्वाश्चैव राक्षसाः ॥ १९ ॥
दैत्याः पिशाचा रक्षांसि भूतानि विविधानि च ।
ब्राह्मणाः क्षत्रिया वैश्याः शूद्रा म्लेच्छादयो भुवि ॥
सर्वे चतुष्पदाश्चैव तिर्यग्योनिगतास्तदा ॥ २० ॥
जङ्गमानि च सत्त्वानि यच्चान्यज्जीवसंज्ञकम् ।
कृत्वा सर्वमशेषं च ममान्तिकमुपागतः ॥ २१ ॥
प्रणम्य प्रयतो भूत्वा वचनं चेदमब्रवीत् ।
कृता सृष्टिर्मया देव! त्वत्प्रसादान्महेश्वर! ॥ २२ ॥
देहि मे परमं स्थानं यथा कीर्त्तिर्ध्रुवा भवेत् ।
ओंकारस्य वचः श्रुत्वा मया प्रोक्तं वरानने ॥ २३ ॥
ममाभीष्टकरं स्थानं नित्यमव्ययमक्षयम् ।
महाकालवनं दिव्यं सर्वसम्पत्करं शुभम् ॥ २४ ॥
तत्र ते भविता कीर्त्तिः शाश्वती नात्र संशयः ।
शूलेश्वरस्य देवस्य पूर्वभागे व्यवस्थितम् ॥ २५ ॥
त्रिकल्पप्रभवं लिङ्गं त्वन्नाम्ना ख्यातिमेष्यति ।
ओंकारेश्वर इत्याख्या भविष्यति जगत्त्रये ॥ २६ ॥
इत्युक्तो हि मया देवि! ओङ्कारो हृष्टमानसः ।
ददर्श तत्र तल्लिङ्गं तस्मिँल्लिङ्गे लयं गतः ॥ २७ ॥
ततः प्रभृति वेदेषु ओङ्कारः क्रियते द्विजैः ।
पुण्यार्थं मङ्गलार्थं च प्रथमं सर्ववस्तुषु ॥ २८ ॥
लयं गतो यदोंकारस्तदा प्रभृति पार्वति! ।
मयोच्यमानं लिङ्गस्य प्रभावातिशयं शृणु ॥ २९ ॥
यद्युगादिसहस्रेषु व्यतीपातशतेषु च ।
अयनानां सहस्रेषु यत्पुण्यं समुदाहृतम् ।

तत्पुण्यमधिकं देवि! ॐकारेश्वरदर्शनात् ॥ ३० ॥
 चतुर्ष्वपि च वेदेषु समधीतेषु यत्फलम् ।
 ततोऽधिकं फलं प्रोक्तमोकारेश्वरदर्शनात् ॥ ३१ ॥
 ब्रह्मचर्येण यत्पुण्यं यावज्जीवं कृतेन च ।
 तत्पुण्यमधिकं प्रोक्तमोकारेश्वरदर्शनात् ॥ ३२ ॥
 करीषसाधने पुण्यं यच्च पुण्यमनाशके ।
 तत्पुण्यमधिकं देवि! ॐकारेश्वरदर्शनात् ॥ ३३ ॥

पूजायां यत्फलं प्रोक्तं तस्य सङ्ख्या न विद्यते ॥ ३४ ॥
 किं यज्ञैर्बहुवित्ताढ्यैः किं तपोभिः सुदुष्करैः ।
 ॐकारदर्शनादेव तत्फलं लभते यतः ॥ ३५ ॥
 पूजनात्स्पर्शनाद्वापि कीर्तनाच्छ्रवणात्तथा ।
 ॐकारेश्वरदेवस्य नराः स्युर्मुक्तिभाजनाः ॥ ३६ ॥
 एष ते कथितो देवि! प्रभावः पापनाशनः ।
 ॐकारेश्वरदेवस्य शृणु विश्वेश्वरं परम् ॥ ३७ ॥

इति श्रीस्कान्दे महापुराणे एकाशीतिसाहस्र्यां संहितायां पञ्चमेऽवन्तीखण्डे
 चतुरशीतिलिङ्गमाहात्म्ये ॐकारेश्वरमाहात्म्यवर्णनं नाम
 द्विपञ्चाशत्तमोऽध्यायः ॥ ५२ ॥

Now we present the Dvādaśa Jyotirlingāni: -

अथ श्रीद्वादशज्योतिर्लिङ्गस्तोत्रम् ।^९

सौराष्ट्रदेशे विश्वेऽतिरम्ये ज्योतिर्मयं चन्द्रकलावतंसम् ॥
भक्तिप्रदानाय कृपावतीर्णं तं सोमनाथं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ १ ॥
श्रीशैलशृङ्गे विबुधातिसङ्गे तुलाद्रितुङ्गेऽपि मुदा वसन्तम् ॥
तमर्जुनं मल्लिकपूर्वमेकं नमामि संसारसमुद्रसेतुम् ॥ २ ॥
अवन्तिकायां विहितावतारं मुक्तिप्रदानाय च सज्जनानाम् ॥
अकालमृत्योः परिरक्षणार्थं वन्दे महाकालमहासुरेशम् ॥ ३ ॥
कावेरिकानर्मदयोः पवित्रे समागमे सज्जनतारणाय ॥
सदैव मान्धातृपुरे वसन्तमोङ्कारमीशं शिवमेकमीडे ॥ ४ ॥
पूर्वोत्तरे प्रज्वलिकाभिधाने सदा वसन्तं गिरिजासमेतम् ॥
सुरासुराराधितपादपद्मं श्रीवैद्यनाथं तमहं नमामि ॥ ५ ॥
याम्ये सदङ्गे नगरेऽतिरम्ये विभूषिताङ्गं विविधैश्च भोगैः ॥
सद्भक्तिमुक्तिप्रदमीशमेकं श्रीनागनाथं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ ६ ॥
महाद्रिपार्श्वे च तटे रमन्तं संपूज्यमानं सततं मुनीन्द्रैः ॥
सुरासुरैर्यक्षमहोरगाद्यैः केदारमीशं शिवमेकमीडे ॥ ७ ॥
सह्याद्रिशीर्षे विमले वसन्तं गोदावरीतीरपवित्रदेशे ॥
यद्दर्शनात् पातकमाशु नाशं प्रयाति तं त्र्यम्बकमीशमीडे ॥ ८ ॥
सुताम्रपर्णीजलराशियोगे निबध्य सेतुं विशिखैरसंख्यैः ॥
श्रीरामचन्द्रेण समर्पितं तं रामेश्वराख्यं नियतं नमामि ॥ ९ ॥
यं डाकिनीशाकिनिकासमाजे निषेव्यमाणं पिशिताशनैश्च ॥
सदैव भीमादिपदप्रसिद्धं तं शङ्करं भक्तहितं नमामि ॥ १० ॥
सानन्दमानन्दवने वसन्तमानन्दकन्दं हतपापवृन्दम् ॥
वाराणसीनाथमनाथनाथं श्रीविश्वनाथं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ ११ ॥
इलापुरे रम्यविशालकेऽस्मिन् समुल्लसन्तं च जगद्वरेण्यम् ॥
वन्दे महोदारतरस्वभावं घृष्णेष्टराख्यं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ १२ ॥
ज्योतिर्मयद्वादशल्लिङ्गकानां शिवात्मनां प्रोक्तमिदं क्रमेण ॥
स्तोत्रं पठित्वा मनुजोऽतिभक्त्या फलं तदालोक्य निजं भजेच्च ॥ १३ ॥

इति श्रीद्वादशज्योतिर्लिङ्गस्तोत्रं सम्पूर्णम् ॥

^९ Taken from the booklet published by Gita Press, Gorakhpur. It is too much to expect from the pirates to give the name of the source.

Note: verse no. 4. Samāgame? At what point? Kāverī merges into Narmadā one mile away toward the east from the eastern edge of the mountain /hill. This matter is not yet fully ascertained. Source for this hymn not given. *Dārśanikā* ascribes this 12 *Jyotirlinga* stotra to Ādi Shaṅkara Bhagavatpāda. No authentication. However, TempleNet, a seemingly reliable source also says that it is composed by Shaṅkarāchārya. If true, it means quite a lot. It says categorically that there is only one *Jyotirlinga* here and that the name of the town was Māndhātā when this hymn was composed. But TempleNet may be only a copy-cat performance.

Here is a popular **Stotra** recited daily by millions of Hindu devotees all over the world.

सौराष्ट्रे सोमनाथं च श्रीशैले मल्लिकार्जुनम् ॥
 उज्जयिन्यां महाकालमोकारमरेध्वरम् ॥ १ ॥
 परल्यां वैद्यनाथं च डाकिन्यां भीमशङ्करम् ॥
 सेतुबन्धे तु रामेशं नागेशं दारुकावने ॥ २ ॥
 वाराणस्यां तु विश्वेशं त्र्यम्बकं गौतमीतटे ॥
 हिमालये तु केदारं घुश्मेशं तु शिवालये ॥ ३ ॥
 एतानि ज्योतिर्लिङ्गानि सायं प्रातः पठेन्नरः ॥
 सप्तजन्मकृतं पापं स्मरणेन विनश्यति ॥ ४ ॥

रामप्रसाद शर्मा शास्त्री adds from शिवपुराण ज्ञा० सं० अध्याय ३८

यं यं काममपेक्ष्यैव पठिष्यन्ति नरोत्तमाः ।
 तस्य तस्य फलप्राप्तिर्भविष्यति न संशयः ॥
 एतेषां दर्शनादेव पातकं नैव तिष्ठति ।
 कर्मक्षयो भवेत्तस्य यस्य तुष्टो महेध्वरः ॥

Note: Twelve pictures of all the 12 jyotirlingas are featured in the Picture Section of our Home Page on the Internet along with many others. We have used the Gītā Press Book that contains all the twelve pictures and much more. Probably they are not real, just the imagination of an artist!

Dvādaśa Jyotirliṅgāni

(Romanized)

01. Saurāṣṭre---Somanātham ca
02. Śrīśaile---Mallikārjunam.
03. Ujjayinyām---Mahākālam
04. Oṃkāram---Amaleśvaram.
05. Paralyām--Vaidyanātham ca
06. Ḍākinyām---Bhīmaśaṅkaram.
07. Setubandhe tu---Rāmeśam
08. Nāgeśam---Dārukāvane.
09. Vārāṇasyām tu---Viśveśam
10. Tryambakam---Gautamītaṭe.
11. Himālaye tu---Kedāram
12. Ghuśmeśam tu---Śivālaye.

Shiva-tattva-darśana of Rāmaprasāda Śāstrī differs in the text. He has taken from *Shivapurāṇa*. It is there. I have seen it. What we had seen so far gives the names in *Karmakāraka*—accusative or objective case. *Shivapurāṇa*, on the other hand, gives in *Kartṛkāraka*—nominative.

In all the cases of the enumeration of the 12 jyotirliṅgas, there is a place name and then the name of the jyotirliṅga, i.e. **adhiṣṭhāna** and **adhiṣṭhāṭṛ**. The number four is an exception. Both are **adhiṣṭhāṭṛ**, i.e. **prathamānta**.

[See p. 25 for further discussion and also Darshanikā. The interpretation provided by present Shankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetha is arbitrary to say the least. It is unjust, improper, immoral. The “Man” providing the illegal and immoral interpretation has taken law into his own hand. Now Law is a burning fireball. It is to be followed with caution and care. It should not be taken into hand.]

Further explanations

01. Somanātha in Saurashtra, Gujarat State. Called since ancient times as Prabhāsa Kshetra. Also called Prabhāsa Paṭṭaṇa. Three miles from Veraval port. However, it is the name of a region and not a specific place or location. Subject of Muslim tyranny and fanaticism time and again. Restored more than once. A great symbol of Hindu solidarity. It is remarkable to note that the Śivaliṅga here is adorned with the symbol of OM. We have reproduced it in our OM Book One. This may be only an imagination of the artist.

With regard to the pictures of the jyotirlingas as presented in the publication of the Gitā Press, we are not sure if they are the actual pictures -- exact photographic images, or just the imaginations of an artist.

It is said that what was rebuilt by Ahilyabāi Holkar of Indore is a little bit away from the one built by India's independent Government under the direction of Sardar Vallabhbhāi Patel.

02. Mallikārjuna on Shrīśaila Mountain on the bank of Krishna River in Andhra Pradesh. Called the Kailash of the South with respect and reverence. What is Kālahastī?

03. Mahākāla in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, located on the holy bank of Kshiprā or Śiprā. One scholar named Samanta has a whole book on this Jyotirlinga entitled *Sacred complex of Ujjain*.

04 To be discussed later in details.

05. Vaidyanātha in Parle or Paralī ? Citābhūmi. Some read: Paralyām Vaidyanātham. Some say: Vaidyanāthm citābhūmau. The stotra cited above says: Prajvalikābhīdhāne. **Prajvalikā** may easily mean “citā,” Some believe this to be near Deogarh in Bihar, Santhal Parganas, while others would like to take it to Andhra Pradesh. Some say in Marāṭhawāḍā--a matter of dispute. But what is in Bihar is quite famous as Vaidyanātha Dhāma.

06. Bhīmaśaṅkaram in Ḍākinī, near Pune in Mahārāshṭra. The River Bhīmā originates from here. There may be some internal connection between the name of the jyotirlinga there--Bhīmaśaṅkara and the name of the river Bhīmā.

07. Rāmeśvara in Tamil Nadu, extreme south of India.¹⁰

08. Nāgeśa in Dārukāvana, Dwarka. There is a very long and interesting story about this Dārukāvana. Same as Bet Dvārakā? ZDMG vol. of 1817 gives in translation a Puranic text. Our *Ratnākara* has discussed this subject very well referring to many other sources

09. Viśvanātha in Varanasi, U.P.

10. Tryambakeśvara on the bank of Gautamī, near Nasik, Mahārāṣṭra. The river is better known as Godāvarī.

11. Kedāranātha in the Himālāyas, earlier geographically in UP, but now a new state has been created called Uttarānchal. "The shrine is in a sylvan setting against the backdrop of the majestic Garhwal Himālayas. Located at the base of the Mandākini Glacier, Kedārnāth can be reached after a 14 km. trek from Gaurīkuṇḍa." [Source: Homeindia.com]

12. Ghuśmeśa in Śivālaya, Ellora, Aurangabad. Also called Ghusṛṇeśa. Manmāḍ-Pūrṇā Rly line. Daulatābād--Devagiri? 66 miles from Manmad, 12 miles from Daulatābād

Located in a place called Berūlagāmva.

We fail to understand how Śivālaya could be a place distinctive enough.

The Internet sources used by us for some of the locations and descriptions do not seem to be accurate or authentic. Yet to be verified, all of them.

Some Related Comments

We had located all the 12 jyotirlingas on a map of India. Of course, the location becomes approximate since the names of many places (where these jyotirlingas are located) turn to be relatively insignificant when shown on a small size map of India, although the same places are quite significant in terms of their being highly holy. But now we have found another map, a better one on the Internet. It shows only the dozen dazzling jyotirlingas by special liṅga marks very distinctive and charming. Internet has a great deal of information on so many topics we are interested in.

¹⁰ Cf. Kedareshvara—extreme north of India.

There are certain cities (locations) which are quite famous worldwide. For example, Ujjayinī, Rāmeśvara, and Vārāṇasī. There are doubts and disputes about the locations of some jyotirlingas, for example Vaidyanātha. No writer has discussed or explained what Paralī is that is given in the hymn as the home of Vaidyanātha. We are told that it is near Deogarh in Santhāl Paraganas, Bihar, but some writers would like to take it to Andhra Pradesh, as stated earlier!

It is to be remembered in this connection that the *Dvādaśjyotirlinga stotra* ascribed to Śrī Śaṅkarācārya says: *Pūrvottare prajvalikābhidhāne*. Now this word *Pūrvottare* would not allow us to take this temple to the South.



04. Omkāreśvara / Amaleśvara / Amareśvara / Mamaleśvara.¹¹

Māndhātā Island or Māndhātā Parvata, Shivapuri, Vaidūrya Maṇi Parvata, East Nimar, now in Khandwa District, MP.

Now we present some detailed discussion of the Omkareśvara jyotirlinga, the fourth avatāra of Śiva Shaṅkara Mahādeva, based on

Śivapurāṇa (Śa. Ru. Sam. 3, Adhyāya 42):

ओंकारः परमेशानो धृतः शम्भोः परात्मनः ॥
अवतारश्चतुर्थो हि भक्ताभीष्टफलप्रदः ॥ १८ ॥
विधिना स्थापितो [?] ¹² भक्त्या स्वलिङ्गात् पार्थिवान्मुने ॥
प्रादुर्भूतो महादेवो विन्ध्यकामप्रपूरकः ॥ १९ ॥
देवैः सम्प्रार्थितस्तत्र द्विधारूपेण संस्थितः ॥
भुक्तिमुक्तिप्रदो लिङ्ग-रूपो वै भक्तवत्सलः [?] ॥ २० ॥
प्रणवे ¹³ चैव चोंकार-नामासील्लिङ्गमुत्तमम् ॥
परमेश्वर ¹⁴ नामासीत् पार्थिवश्च मुनीश्वर ॥ २१ ॥
भक्ताभीष्टप्रदो ज्ञेयो योऽपि दृष्टोऽर्चितो मुने ॥
ज्योतिर्लिङ्गे महादिव्ये वर्णिते ¹⁵ ते महामुने ॥ २२ ॥

It is obvious from the above citation that there are two jyotirlingas (or at least one of the two is a jyotirlinga) at this holy place. One more unique speciality. However, the Souvenir volume published to commemorate the 12th centenary celebrations of Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda says that the present Shaṅkarāchārya of Kanchi Kamakoti Pitha has decreed that there is only one Omkareśvara jyotirlinga here, the one at the top of the Māndhātā Hill. He is a great authority by position. But we will call this a pontification. We don't know how he will explain the dual number—*dvivacana*--*jyotirlinga mahādivye Varṇite*¹⁶...

¹¹ So many names! Our primary source here is—Rama Prasad.

¹² By whom?

¹³ Pranave! Would it mean on the mountain named Omakara?

¹⁴ Parameshvara ? Would it mean Amareshvara?

¹⁵ Mark the dual no.

¹⁶ न हि प्रतिज्ञामात्रेणार्थनिर्वाहः । अथ च, एकाकिनी प्रतिज्ञा हि प्रतिज्ञातं न साधयेत् । We need a प्रमाण । See गौतमीयन्याय सूत्र -- प्रमाणप्रमेय... । The reader is advised to pay special attention to what appears in this very Notebook with regard to Amareshvara located on the South Bank of Narmada.

Darshanikā brings in many other Shaṅkarāchāryas to add their weighty words to this controversy in favor of there being only one Jyotirlinga. This view cannot be accepted easily. It is a function of vested interests.

This holy temple is located at the confluence of Narmadā and Kāveri rivers. The Kāveri is a small tributary that meets the great holy Narmadā about a mile up the river. There is a great deal of myth here which obscures the Truth. **Many statements made by many writers presented here are very vague.** Kapilā or Kapiladhārā is a small stream that flows into the south bank of Narmadā. It originates from the Satpura Mountain. It divides Vishṇupuri (W.) and Brahmapuri (E.). It is very close to the temple of Amareśvara. **An important point to take note of.** The short article by Vishṇurāma Sanāvadyā has a good description of many temples on the south side of Māndhātādvīpagiri.

Rāma Prasāda also says that there are two jyotirlingas here--Om̐kāreśvara and Amaleśvara or Amareśvara, but they are regarded as one for the purpose of numbering and counting the totality of the jyotirlingas. A dozen is a dozen. This view is expressed by many other writers. But it is only a make-belief attempt. It is an arbitray decision. According to some others, the name of the second jyotirlinga is Mamaleśvara--Om̐kāram Mamaleśvaram.¹⁷

Skandapurāṇa, Revākhaṇḍa, Adhyāya 22 [verse?]: [as quoted by Rāmaprasāda Shāstri. **Original not yet seen. Nag ed. does not have this specific verse in chap 22.**]

**Devasthānasamam hyetat matprasādāt bhaviṣyati.
Annadānam tapaḥ pūjā tathā prāṇavisarjanam.
Ye kurvanti narās teṣām Śivalokanivāsanam.**

Rāmaprasāda Shastri translates the expression *prāṇavisarjanam* merely as *mṛtyu pānā* (meet with the death in a natural way). But it is not correct. The term means "self-immolation" as described by the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (5:321: 2b) and copied by many other writers.

¹⁷ Since we wrote the above we have collected much more information of various kinds from many sources. This is not a question that can be easily settled. However, one important fact is to be kept in mind. If the image of Shiva at the Omkareshvara Temple is **svayambhu** and the one at Amareshvara is **kṛtrima** the controversy may be settled in favor of the one at Mount Manhata.

In ancient Sanskrit literature it is called *Bhṛgupatana*. *Amarakośa* says: *Prapātas tvatato bhṛguḥ*. *EB* mentions the *bhṛgupatana* as a performance of the holy act that was discontinued in 1824.¹⁸

Sva-śarīra-visarjana, sva-deha-bali-dāna, Self-immolation

Rāmaprasāda Shāstri quotes a Paurāṇika vacana. He does not interpret the original word *ātma-visarjana* correctly. It is not *mṛtyu pānā*--meet the natural death, but *visarjana* = *tyāga*=abandonment, let it be repeated.

Consider *satī-prathā*.

Johāra of the Rajasthan--heroines who burnt themselves in a group when their husbands went to war to protect their honor and country.

Those who have no charm for the assemblage of materials called the "deha" have no hesitation in sacrificing it for a noble cause.

Cf. Kālidāsa--*Deheṣvanāsthā khalu bhautikeṣu*.

Suicide --*ātmahatyā* is regarded as sin. *Bhṛgupatana*, on the other hand, is regarded virtuous.

¹⁸ This statement was made earlier. Since then we have found many other writers writing this.

अथ श्रीशिवमहापुराणे चतुर्थ्या कोटिरुद्रसंहितायाम्
ओंकारेश्वरज्योतिर्लिङ्ग-माहात्म्यवर्णनम् ।
अष्टादशोऽध्यायः ।

ऋषय ऊचुः- सूत सूत महाभाग श्राविता ह्यद्भुता कथा ।
महाकालाख्यलिङ्गस्य निजभक्तसुरक्षिणः । १ ॥
ज्योतिर्लिङ्गं चतुर्थं च कृपया वद वित्तम ।
ॐकारं परमेशस्य सर्वपातकहारिणः ॥ २ ॥

सूत उवाच :-

ॐकारं परमेशाख्यं लिङ्गमासीद्यथा द्विजाः ।
तथा वक्ष्यामि वः प्रीत्या श्रूयतां परमर्षयः ॥ ३ ॥
कस्मिंश्चित् समये चात्र नारदो भगवान् मुनिः ।
गोकर्णाख्यं शिवं गत्वा सिषेवे परभक्तिमान् ॥ ४ ॥
ततः स आगतो विन्ध्यं नगेशं मुनिसत्तमः ।
तत्रैव पूजितस्तेन बहुमानपुरःसरम् ॥ ५ ॥
मयि सर्वं विद्यते च न न्यूनं हि कदाचन ।
इति भावं समास्थाय संस्थितो नारदाग्रतः ॥ ६ ॥

तन्मानं तत्तदा श्रुत्वा नारदो मानहा ततः ।
निःश्वस्य संस्थितस्तत्र श्रुत्वा विन्ध्योऽब्रवीदिदम् ॥ ७ ॥

विन्ध्य उवाचः--

किं न्यूनं च त्वया दृष्टं मयि निःश्वासकारणम् ।
तत् श्रुत्वा नारदो वाक्यमब्रवीत् स महामुनिः ॥ ८ ॥

नारद उवाचः--

विद्यते त्वयि सर्वं हि मेरुरुच्चतरः पुनः ।
देवेष्वपि विभागोऽस्य न तवास्ति कदाचन ॥ ९ ॥

सूत उवाचः--

इत्युक्त्वा नारदस्तस्माज्जगाम च यथाऽऽगतम् ।
विन्ध्यश्च परितप्तो वै धिग् वै मे जीवितादिकम् ॥ १० ॥
विश्वेश्वरं तथा शम्भुमाराध्य च तपाम्यहम् ।

इति निश्चित्य मनसा शङ्करं शरणं गतः ॥ ११ ॥
जगाम तत्र सुप्रीत्या ह्योङ्कारो यत्र वै स्वयम्¹⁹
चकार च पुनस्तत्र शिवमूर्तिं च पार्थिवीम् ॥ १२ ॥
आराध्य च तदा शम्भुं षण्मासं स निरन्तरम् ।
न चचाल तपःस्थानाच्छिवध्यानपरायणः ॥ १३ ॥
एवं विन्ध्यतपो दृष्ट्वा प्रसन्नः पार्वतीपतिः ।
स्वरूपं दर्शयामास दुर्लभं योगिनामपि ॥ १४ ॥
प्रसन्नः स तदोवाच ब्रूहि त्वं मनसेप्सितम् ।
तपसा ते प्रसन्नोऽस्मि भक्तानामीप्सितप्रदः ॥ १५ ॥

विन्ध्य उवाच :--

यदि प्रसन्नो देवेश बुद्धिं देहि यथेप्सिताम् ।
स्वकर्मसाधिनीं शम्भो त्वं सदा भक्तवत्सलः ॥ १६ ॥

सूत उवाच :--

तत् श्रुत्वा भगवाञ्छम्भुश्चिचेत हृदये चिरम् ।
परोपतापदं विन्ध्यो वरमिच्छति मूढधीः ॥ १७ ॥
किं करोमि यदेतस्मै वरदानं भवेच्छुभम् ।
मदत्तं परदुःखाय वरदानं यथा न हि ॥ १८ ॥

सूत उवाच :--

तथापि दत्तवान् शम्भुस्तस्मै तद्वरमुत्तमम् ।
विन्ध्य पर्वतराज त्वं यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥ १९ ॥
एवं च समये देवाः ऋषयश्चामलाशयाः ।
संपूज्य शङ्करं तत्र स्थातव्यमिति चाब्रुवन् ॥ २० ॥
तत् श्रुत्वा देववचनं प्रसन्नः परमेश्वरः ।
तथैव कृतवान् प्रीत्या लोकानां सुखहेतवे ॥ २१ ॥
ॐकारं चैव यल्लिङ्गमेकं तच्च द्विधागतम् ।
प्रणवे चैव ॐकारनामासीत्स सदाशिवः ॥ २२ ॥
पार्थिवे चैव यज्जातं तदासीत् परमेश्वरः ।
भक्ताभीष्टप्रदौ चोभौ भुक्तिमुक्तिप्रदौ द्विजाः²⁰ ॥ २३ ॥

¹⁹ To be noted well.

²⁰ To be noted well.

तत्पूजां च तदा चक्रुर्देवाञ्च ऋषयस्तथा ।
प्रापुर्वराननेकांश्च सन्तोष्य वृषभध्वजम् ॥ २४ ॥
स्वस्वस्थानं ययुर्देवा विन्ध्योऽपि मुदितोऽधिकम् ।
कार्यं साधितवान् स्वीयं परितापं जहौ द्विजाः ॥ २५ ॥
य एवं पूजयेच्छम्भुं मातृगर्भं वसेन्न हि ।
यदभीष्टं फलं तच्च प्राप्नुयान्नात्र संशयः ॥ २६ ॥

सूत उवाच :--

एतत्ते सर्वमाख्यातमोङ्कारप्रभवे फलम् ।

इति श्रीशिवमहापुराणे चतुर्थ्यां कोटिरुद्रसंहितायाम्
ओंकारेश्वरज्योतिर्लिङ्ग-माहात्म्यवर्णनं नामाष्टादशोऽध्यायः॥



विन्ध्यकी तपस्या, ओंकारमें परमेश्वर²¹ लिङ्गके प्रादुर्भाव और उसकी महिमा का वर्णन

ऋषियों ने कहा -- महाभाग सूतजी! आपने अपने भक्तोंकी रक्षा करनेवाले महाकाल नामक शिवलिङ्गकी वह अद्भुत कथा सुनायी है। अब कृपा करके चौथे ज्योतिर्लिङ्ग का परिचय दीजिये -- ओंकार तीर्थ में सर्वपातकहारी परमेश्वर का जो ज्योतिर्लिङ्ग है, उसके आविर्भाव की कथा सुनाइये।

सूतजी बोले --महर्षियों ! ओंकार तीर्थमें परमेशसंज्ञक ज्योतिर्लिङ्ग जिस प्रकार प्रकट हुआ, वह बताता हूँ। एक समय की बात है भगवान् नारद मुनि गोकर्ण नामक शिव के समीप जाकर बड़ी भक्तिके साथ उनकी सेवा करने लगे। कुछ काल के बाद वे मुनिश्रेष्ठ गिरिराज विन्ध्य पर आये और विन्ध्यने वहाँ बड़े आदर सत्कार के साथ उनका पूजन किया। मेरे यहाँ सब कुछ है, कभी किसी बात की कोई कमी नहीं होती है, इस भाव को लेकर विन्ध्याचल नारदजी के सामने खड़ा हो गया। उसकी वह अभिमान भरी बात [!] सुनकर अहंकारनाशक नारद मुनि लम्बी साँस खींचकर चुपचाप खड़े रह गये। यह देख विन्ध्यपर्वत ने पूछा --'आपने मेरे यहाँ कौनसी कमी देखी है ? आपके इस तरह लम्बी साँस खींचने का क्या कारण है ?'

नारदजीने कहा --भैया ! तुम्हारे यहाँ सब कुछ है। फिर भी मेरु पर्वत तुमसे बहुत ऊँचा है। उसके शिखरों का विभाग देवताओं के लोको में भी पहुँचा हुआ है। किन्तु तुम्हारे शिखर का भाग वहाँ तक अभी नहीं पहुँच सका है।

सूतजी कहते हैं -- ऐसा कहकर नारदजी वहाँ से जिस तरह आये थे, उसी तरह चल दिये। परन्तु विन्ध्य पर्वत 'मेरे जीवन आदिको धिक्कार है' ऐसा सोचता हुआ मन ही मन संतप्त हो उठा। अच्छा, 'अब मैं विश्वनाथ भगवान् शम्भु की आराधनापूर्वक तपस्या करूँगा' ऐसा हार्दिक निश्चय करके वह भगवान् शंकर की शरण में गया। तदनन्तर जहाँ साक्षात् ओंकार की स्थिति है, वहाँ प्रसन्नतापूर्वक जाकर शिव की पार्थिव मूर्ति बनायी और छः मासतक निरन्तर शम्भु की आराधना करके शिव के ध्यान में तत्पर हो वह अपनी तपस्या के स्थान से हिला तक नहीं। विन्ध्याचल की ऐसी तपस्या देखकर पार्वतीपति प्रसन्न हो गये। उन्होंने विन्ध्याचल को अपना वह स्वरूप दिखाया जो योगियों के लिये भी दुर्लभ है। वे प्रसन्न होकर उस समय उससे बोले--'विन्ध्य ! तुम मनोवाञ्छित वर मांगो। मैं भक्तों को अभीष्ट वर देनेवाला हूँ और तुम्हारी तपस्या से प्रसन्न हूँ।'

²¹ Imp. to note.

विन्ध्य बोला-- देवेश्वर शम्भो ! आप सदा ही भक्तवत्सल हैं । यदि आप मुझ पर प्रसन्न हैं तो मुझे वह अभीष्ट बुद्धि प्रदान कीजिये, जो अपने कार्य को सिद्ध करने वाली हो ।

भगवान् शम्भु ने उसे वह उत्तम वर दे दिया और कहा--पर्वतराज विन्ध्य ! तुम जैसा चाहो वैसा करो'। इसी समय देवता तथा निर्मल अन्तःकरणवाले ऋषि वहाँ आये और शङ्कर की पूजा करके बोले--'प्रभो ! आप यहाँ स्थिर रूप से निवास करें'।²²

देवताओं की यह बात सुनकर परमेश्वर शिव प्रसन्न हो गये और लोगों को सुख देने के लिये उन्होंने सहर्ष वैसा ही किया । वहाँ जो एक ही ओंकारलिङ्ग था, वह दो स्वरूपों में विभक्त हो गया । प्रणव में जो सदाशिव थे, वे ओंकार नाम से विख्यात हुए और पार्थिवमूर्ति में जो शिव-ज्योति प्रतिष्ठित हुई, उसकी परमेश्वर संज्ञा हुई । (परमेश्वर को ही अमलेश्वर भी कहते हैं) । इस प्रकार ओंकार और परमेश्वर ये दोनों शिवलिङ्ग भक्तों को अभीष्ट फल प्रदान करने वाले हैं । उस समय देवताओं ने और ऋषियों ने उन दोनों लिङ्गों की पूजा की और भगवान् वृषभध्वज को सन्तुष्ट करके अनेक वर प्राप्त किये । तत्पश्चात् देवता अपने अपने स्थान को गये और विन्ध्याचल भी अधिक प्रसन्नता का अनुभव करने लगा । उसने अपने अभीष्ट कार्य को सिद्ध किया और मानसिक परिताप को त्याग दिया । जो पुरुष इस प्रकार भगवान् शङ्कर का पूजन करता है, वह माता के गर्भ में फिर नहीं आता और अपने अभीष्ट फल को प्राप्त कर लेता है इसमें संशय नहीं ।

What has been stated here as the cause of the disturbance in the mind of the Vindhya Mountain is different from what is stated elsewhere. There the cause is stated as Vindhya's not having the physical presence of Gods [home] on him. Extreme height of Meru Mountain may be another cause of jealousy.

Our original reads: **Deveṣvapi vibhāgo'sti na tavāsti kadācana.** i.e. Meru receives his share of offerings along with other gods. You don't get it as your own share. The idea is that Meru is reckoned as a god, but Vindhya is not.

²² What we read in Śivapurana differs. Vindhya wanted to achieve whatever he wished or something like that. Shiva understood the evil mind of Vindhya. He did not like it, but he gave it unwillingly, or something like that.

ओंकारमान्धाता--धामविधाता
चक्रवर्ती सम्राट्
राजर्षि महान् मान्धाता

मान्धाता स महीपतिः क्षितितलेऽलङ्कारभूतो गतः
सेतुर्येन महोदधौ विरचितः क्वासौ दशास्यान्तकः ॥
अन्ये चापि युधिष्ठिरप्रभृतयो यावन्त एवाभवन्
नैकेनापि समं गता वसुमती मुञ्च त्वया यास्यति ॥

भोजप्रबन्धे
सुभाषितरत्नभाण्डागारतः
p. 379, verse 374.

It is significant to note here that Māndhātā flourished in the Ādiyuga, also called Kṛtayuga or Satyayuga.

Bhagavān Shri Rāmacandra flourished in Tretā, which is the second yuga.

And Yudhiṣṭhira flourished in the Dvāpara, which is the third one, beyond the two.

Thus Māndhātā leads the Worthiest Class of All Kings.

Māndhātā

The Great Emperor

By Vettam Mani

Yuvanāśva, the father of Māndhātā had one hundred wives. Still he had no child. Greatly grief-stricken by the lack of a son he went to the forest to see the people of virtue and piety. During his wandering in the forest he happened to reach an āshrama of sages. Yuvanāśva went in and sat in their midst. The sages asked him why he looked so sad and the King crying like a child told them the cause of his grief. The sages took pity on him and made him conduct the yāga named ‘Indra-daivata.’ They brought a jug of water, made potent by re-citals of mantras, to be given to the queens to make them pregnant, and placed the pot in the yāgaśālā. The yāga was coming to an end.

One day [or night?] the King felt unusually thirsty and not willing to disturb the sages who were taking rest [or sleeping?] the King entered the yāgaśālā and finding a jug there full of water drank from it and quenched his thirst, little knowing that it contained the water made potent for a specific purpose by mantras. The next day when the sages went to the yāgaśālā they found the jug almost empty and were worried and started making enquiries. The King then confessed what he had done. The sages said that it was futile to fight against fate and somehow finished the yāga and went to their āśramas.

The King became pregnant and after ten months a child came out bursting open the right side of his stomach. The King then consulted his ministers as to what should be done with the child and on their advice the child was taken to the forest and left there. But the child was protected by the Devas and they enquired among themselves as to whose breast-feeding it would get, when Indra appeared and said “Mām dhātā,” meaning “it would drink²³ me.” That was how the child got the name “Māndhātā.” Indra put the child’s big toe into its mouth and the child began to suck milk through it. Māndhātā who grew thus drinking his own toe became a mighty man of renown. (7th Skandha, Devī Bhāgavata).

3) *Administration of the state and marriage.* When Māndhātā became a man of great strength his father died and he ascended the throne and became an Emperor of great fame. He conquered many kingdoms. He made his enemies flee from him. Because he intimidated the dasyus he got the name Trasadasus. He married the perfect-figured chaste daughter Bindumati of Śaśabindurāja. She got two sons, named Purukutsa and Mucukunda.

²³ Nurse or suckle.

The Purāṇa [which?] states that Māndhātā had another son named Ambarīṣa and fifty daughters who were all married to a sage named Saubhari.²⁴

4) How he caused rain in the country. Māndhātā ruled the country very virtuously without at any time going against truth and justice and his country became prosperous. Once it so happened that there were no rains for three successive years in the country and greatly worried King went to the forest to know from the great sages there the reason for such a calamity. The sages told the King thus: “Oh King, of all yugas Kṛtayuga is the best. This Yuga is a Brāhmin-predominant one and Dharma stands on four legs. Penance is for Brahmins only and no man of any other caste can do penance in this yuga. In your country a śūdra is performing penance and that is why the clouds refuse to shower rains. Kill him and then evil will go.” Hearing this Māndhātā replied” I will never kill an innocent ascetic. Teach me my duty at this time of peril.” The sages were pleased at the reply of the King and advised him thus: “Oh King start observing *Vrata* on the *ekādaśī* day-(Eleventh day in each half of a month). The *ekādaśī* day which falls in the bright half of Bhādrapada is called ‘*Padmanābha*.’ and if you observe it, by its cogency you will get not only rains but prosperity and happiness free from misery of any kind. You must persuade your subjects also to observe this.”

The King returning to his palace started observing *ekādaśī* along with his subjects of all the four castes and then it started to rain. Rain came in plenty and all the crops were rich. The subjects became happy. (Chapter 59, Padma-purāṇa).

5) Other details:

- (i) Māndhātā had to fight once against Lavaṇāsura but had to accept defeat before [in the face of?] the god-given spear which Lavaṇāsura possssed. (Uttara Rāmāyaṇa).
- (ii) Aśvanīdevas once helped Māndhātā in his work as an owner of land. (Sūkta 112, Anuvāka 16, Maṇḍala 1, Ṛgveda).
- (iii) Māndhātā became pure by yajña and attained Svarga. (śloka 5, Chapter 257, Vana Parva).
- (iv) Once Nārada spoke to Sañjaya about the greatness of Māndhātā. (Chapter 62, Droṇa Parva).

²⁴ Cf. Saubhari Nyāya in our Laukikanyāyānālī.

- (v) At another time, Śrī Kṛṣṇa spoke in glowing terms about the **yajña** of Māndhātā. (Śloka 81, Chapter 29, Śānti Parva).
- (vi) Once Mahāviṣṇu came to Māndhātā disguised as Indra and conversed with him on ‘Rājadharmā’ (duties and responsibilities of a King). (Śloka 16, Chapter 64, Śānti Parva).
- (vii) Utatthya Angiras once taught Māndhātā the outlines of Rāja-dharma. (Chapter 90, Śānti Parva).
- (viii) Māndhātā conquered the whole world in one day (Śloka 16, Chapter 124, Śānti Parva).
- (ix) On another occasion Bṛhaspati conversed with him on the subject of Godāna (The giving away of cows as gifts). (Śloka 4, Chapter 76, Anuśāsana Parva).
- (x) Māndhātā gave away as gifts millions of cows, (Śloka 5, Chapter 85, Anuśāsana Parva).
- (xi) Māndhātā hated non-vegetarian food. (Śloka 61, Chapter 115, Anuśāsana Parva).

From *Puraṇic Encyclopedia*.

Vettam Mani does not relate his hero with Mount Māndhātā. A deplorable omission, indeed.

The great Māndhātā of the solar race plays a significant role in the story given in the Saubharinyāya. He had fifty princesses. All were married to this sage named Saubhari. See our *Laukikanyāyāñjali* by M. L. Nagar & Kumari Kamalee, 2000, p. 293.

Om : One God Universal

An early, authentic account, based on direct perception.
A class by itself



Courtesy: Friends of Indore, Pal and Joshi

Māndhātā

By Captain James Forsyth²⁵

Deputy Commissioner of Nimar

Author of *Highlands of Central India*

IN: *The Gazetteer of the Central Provinces of India*

Ed. By Charles Grant. 2nd ed. 1870

Courtesy of Omkareshwar Temple Trust

Māndhātā : An island of Nabadā belonging to the Nimār District, remarkable as containing numerous temples, ancient and modern, including the great shrine of Omkāra, a form of Śiva. The island covers an area of about five-sixth of a square mile. Towards the northern branch of the river the slope is not very abrupt in most places, but its southern and eastern faces terminate in bluff precipices 400 to 500 in height. It is cleft in two by a deep ravine running nearly north and south, the eastern end containing about one third of the area. [imp. to note]²⁶

²⁵ He visited the Holy Land twice and explored it extensively. His is an evidenced statement.

²⁶ It is only a wild guess on our part today—not verified by direct view, because we have not seen it ourselves—but we think that the one third part to the east is populated and contains the cluster of temples and habitations.

The southern bank of the Narbadā opposite Māndhātā (called Godarpura) is as precipitous as Māndhātā, and between them the river forms an exceedingly deep and silent pool, full of alligators and large fish, many of which are so tame as to take grain off the lower steps of the sacred ghāts.



Courtesy: Friends of Indore, Pal and Joshi

The rocks on both sides of the river are of a greenish hue, very boldly stratified, and said to be homestone slate.

The island is said in the Narbadā Khand (professing to be a portion of the Skanda Purāṇa) to have been originally called Vaidūrya Maṇī Parvata, which was changed to Māndhātā as a boon granted by Omkāṛ to the Raja Mandhatri, seventeenth of the Solar race, who had here performed a great sacrifice to the God. [Is this too written in the said Purāṇa? No authentication.]

Be this as it may, there is no doubt that the worship of Shiva was established here at an early age. On Māndhātā, the shrine of Omkāṛ, and on the southern bank that of Amareśvara (Lord of the Immortals), are two of the twelve great *liṅgas* which existed in India when Mohammad of Ghazni demolished the temple of Somanātha in A.D.1024. The name Omkāṛ is from the syllable Om, which says Professor Wilson,²⁷ is a combination of three letters invested by Hindu mysticism with peculiar sanctity, employed in the beginning of all prayers. It comprehends all the gods, the Vedas, the three spheres of the world, etc.

²⁷ Professor H.H. Wilson's Essays on the Religion of the Hindus, vol. 1, p. 223, Edn. 1862.
Hall's Edition of Wilson's Vishnu Purana, vol. 1, pt. 1, chap 1, p. 1, note 1.

The Brāhmanas who now officiate at the shrine wish to exclude Omkāra from the twelve Liṅgas, usually called “Ādi” or first, as something above and before them all. The Narmadā Khaṇḍa supports them in this assertion, but as it contains a prophecy of the time when India shall be ruled by *Mlecchas* (non-Hindus) and other modern allusions, its antiquity is certainly a good deal open to doubt. The evidence of the Kāśī Khaṇḍa and other Shivite writings is against them, and the pilgrims, who have vowed to visit Bārā [bārā=bārāha=12] Jyoti Liṅgas, pay their adoration both to Omkāra and Amareśvara.

Regarding the latter, they are, however, avowedly left by the Brāhmanas under pious mistake. Amareśvara was altogether lost during the wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the south banks having been deserted and overgrown with jungle, and when, towards the close of the eighteenth century, the Peshvas desired to rebuild the temple, neither the Liṅga nor the old temple could be found. The temple was, however, built, together with a group of smaller ones, from slabs brought chiefly from the ruined temples on the island, and sometimes afterwards in digging the bricks (many of which of an old shape are found all over the neighborhood) the old Liṅga was found standing on four *arghās*, one above the other, showing that it had existed through the four ages of the world.²⁸ It was also pronounced to be the true one by Benares paṇḍits, in consequence of being situated in a line with Omkāra and the Kapilā Saṅgam, where a small stream joins the Narmadā. Rao Daulat Singh, the last Raja of Māndhātā, built a temple over it, but the honours and name were gone, and it has now been dubbed [Kāśī?]Vishva Nāth, to distinguish it from its traditional rival.

²⁸ Much of it is Greek and Latin to us.



Indeed it seems very doubtful whether the present Omkāra is the real old deity of that name. The temple is evidently of modern construction and all the really old temples in the place are situated along the banks of the northern branch of the Narmadā²⁹, not the southern. Tradition also states that the chief places of worship used to be on that side of the island, and probably at one time, it was also the main channel of the river, as indeed it still is during floods. It has now been dubbed the Kāveri; and fiction [!] is that a stream of that name which enters the Narbadā about a mile higher up from the south passes unmixed through the waters and again leaves it at Māndhātā in order to confer additional sanctity on the place by making a double saṅgama or junction of two holy rivers.

The Rājā of Māndhātā, who is hereditary custodian of all the modern temples, is a Bhilāla, claiming descent from a Chauhān Rajput named Bhārat Singh, who is stated in the family genealogy to have taken Māndhātā from a Bhil chief in the year A.D. 1165. The genealogy gives twenty eight generations to the family since then, or twenty-five years to each generation. The Bhilālas of this part of India are all descended from alliance of Rajputs with Bhils, and take the name of the Rajput clan to which they trace back their origins.

The same genealogy affirms that at that time a Gossin [Gosāin], named Daryāo Nāth was the only worshipper of Omkāra on the island, which could not be visited by pilgrims for fear of a terrible God called Kāl-Bhairava, and his consort, Kālī Devī, who regularly fed on human flesh. Daryao Nath, however, by his austerities shut up the latter in a sub-terranean cave (the mouth of which may still be seen) appeasing her by creating an image outside to receive worship, and arranged with Kāl Bhairava that for the future he should receive human sacrifices at regular intervals.

²⁹ The so-called Kāverī



Accordingly thereafter devotees were induced to precipitate themselves over the Bīrkhalā rocks, at the eastern end of the island on to the rocks by the river brink, where the terrible deity resided, a practice which continued till 1824 [1822?], in which year the British officer in charge of Nimār witnessed the last offering of the sort made to Kāl Bhairava.

The Chauhān Bhārat Singh is related to have been invited by Daryāo Nāth to kill Nāthū Bhīl, which he did; but it is more likely that he only married his daughter, and thus founded the present family, as Nāthū's descendents are still the hereditary custodians of all the temples on the top and north side of the hill, that is of all those that are really ancient. [imp. to note]. The disciples of Daryāo Nāth still enjoy lands on account of the worship of Omkāra. It is not difficult to trace in this fragmentary story the revival of the worship of Shiva which took place about the tenth or eleventh century, and its gradual propagation by adventurous missionaries, adopting as it went the Kālī's and Bhairavas of the savage tribes as mythological consorts and sons of Shiva, just as its Rajput protectors allied themselves with the daughters of the wild Bhil chiefs who worshipped these blood thirsty deities.

The old temples about Māndhātā have all suffered greatly from the bigotry of the Mohammedans who ruled the country from about A. D. 1400. Every old dome is overthrown, and not a single figure of a god or animal is to be found unmutilated. The fanatic Alā-ud-dīn passed through the country in A.D. 1295 on his return from his Deccan raid, and as he took Asīrgarh which is not far off, it is improbable that he would have passed over so tempting an idol preserve as

Māndhātā. Doubtless the work commenced by him was continued by the Ghori princes of Malwa, and completed by that arch iconoclast Aurangzeb. [imp. to note].

Yet much remains among the ruins which must be highly interesting to the archaeologist. [emphasis added] Both the hills are covered with remnants of habitations built in stone without cement. The walls of the different forts, two of which enclose the two sections of the island itself, and two more the rocky eminances of the southern banks, display some excellent specimens of the old style of Hindu architecture. They are formed of very large blocks of stone without cement. The stone is partly the basalt of the hill itself, and partly a coarse yellow sandstone which must have been brought from a considerable distance. [imp. to note.]



The gateways are formed with horizontal arches, and ornamented with much fine carving, statues of gods, etc. The best are those on the eastern end of the island, or Māndhātā proper [N.B.] which also appears to be the only part that has ever received any repairs. [imp. to note].



It is easy to distinguish these from the old works, some being even as recent as the Mohammedan period, as at the Bhīmārjunī gate (opposite the Bīrkhalā rocks), where there is distinct pointed archway laid in mortar.

The oldest Shivite temple in the place is probably that on the Bīrkhalā rocks at the extreme eastern point of the island. It consists of a sort of closed court-yard with a front verandah, through which apparently was passage to the shrine, which has now completely disappeared. It is totally different in plan from any other temples, which consists of the ordinary shrine and porch. The stones are of great size, the verandah and colonnades of the court-yard being supported on massive pillars very plainly carved in rectilineal figures.



Courtesy: Friends of Indore, Pal and Joshi

On the Māndhātā hill are the remains of what must have been if it ever approached completion, a remarkably fine Shivite temple, now called Siddheśvar Mahādeva. The dome which covered the shrine is, however, completely gone and has been recently replaced by mean flat roof, not so high as the remaining pillars of the porches. In its fall it has also overthrown and covered many of the pillars of the porches, and much of the fine work of plinth. It appears to have been a square shrine of about twenty-six feet outside measurement, with projections added to the four sides, each about five feet in depth. In each of these was a doorway, and in front of each door a porch (Sabhā Mandap) resting on fourteen pillars. These pillars are fourteen feet high to the architrave, each porch being thus a perfect cube. They are elaborately carved in squares, polygons, and circles and most of them have curious frieze or fillet of Satyr-like figures about half way up.



They are about three feet square at the foot and do not taper very much. They are all crowned with bracket capitals, on which rest the architraves, each bracket being carved into a grotesque squat human figure. The roofs of these porches appear to have been of flat slabs. It is impossible now to say what the *adytum* or shrine was like; but if it corresponded with the porches, it must have been a most imposing structure. [very imp.]



The most remarkable feature of the building, however, is the plinth or platform on which it is built; this projects ten or twelve feet beyond the porches in front of each of which it is broken into flight of ten steps. It is raised about ten feet off the ground and appears to have been faced all round with a frieze of elephants, carved in almost complete relief of stone slabs. The elephants are between four and five feet in height and are executed with singular correctness and excellence of attitude. The material is yellow sandstone and they are consequently now a good deal weather-worn. In some cases there are two on a single slab in an attitude of combat, but more generally a single one, resting one foot on a small prostrate human figure. This frieze does not appear to have been completed, as close by, within an enclosure of which two sides are still standing, are a number of detached slabs with elephants carved on them, exactly like those on the plinth, all these, and most in the temple also have been sadly mutilated—trunks, ears, figure of the rider being generally broken off. The Rājā of Māndhātā has also removed a number to build into his new palace, after getting a mason to chisel them down in a manageable size. The only two left at all perfect now have been rescued, and will be properly cared for.³⁰



There is no record of any extensive crescentades against idol between the time of Alā-ud-dīn and Aurangzeb, nor is it very likely that so pretentious a work as this would have been undertaken so late as the time of Aurangzeb; besides which its style and excellence of architecture seem evidently to belong to an earlier age. It is not therefore unreasonable to conclude that it was just being finished in A.D. 1295, when Sultan Alā-ud-dīn interrupted the works, demolishing even the elephants that were still standing in the workshop. Most of them had, however,

³⁰ They are now guarding the entrance to the Central Museum at Nagpur, we are told.

been fixed in their places and the superstructure was probably complete, if so, the temple must have been inferior, as work of art, to no structural Hindu temple of that period of which illustrations or descriptions have been given to the public; besides which it appears to have been on a plan unusual in any known school of Hindu architecture; at least Fergusson gives no notice of four open pillared porches in a Hindu temple [N.B.]

There is another old Śivite temple below the Māndhātā hill, on the bank of the so-called Kāverī branch of the Narmadā. The porch only of this too is all that remains of the old work, and though probably older, it is inferior in carving and general effect to the temple already described. In neither of these buildings is there a trace of lime in the old part of the work.

On the northern section of the island called Muchukund (after Rājā Māndhātā's son) [very imp. to note] there are no temples now standing of any age. That of Gaurī Somanāth appears, however, to be an old shrine rebuilt with lime. Somanāth himself is a gigantic *liṅga*, now black but once, as the story goes, white, in accordance with its name [!]³¹.



The Mohammedan leader, who destroyed old Māndhātā, is related to have been told that this *liṅga* had the property of displaying to the curious a reflection of the subject into which their souls should pass at their metempsychosis, and on inquiring as to his own fate, the devout son of Islam was shown in the *liṅga* a pig, whereon he cast it into the fire, and since then it has assumed its jet black hue. An immense Nandī (Shiva's bull) of a fine green stone, lies headless³² in front of the shrine, and about a hundred yards in front of door is an overthrown pillar [N.B.], which has been nineteen and a half feet high with its capital and stood on a raised platform of basalt blocks. For the first six and a half feet it is two and a half feet square--then polygonal, with occasional round belts to the capital, which is square--and furnished with five holes in the top, either to hold lamps or the fastening of some figures.

³¹ If the writer means that the name Gaurī means white qualifying Shiva, he is misinformed. Gaurī was Parvatī and not Shiva.

³² Imp. to note!



On the north bank of the so-called Kāverī, opposite Māndhātā is a series of deserted temples, evidently of considerable antiquity. Māndhātā itself seems to have been a perfect stronghold of Shaivism, no temple having ever been erected save to the destroyer or his associate deities. Here, however, besides one or two old structures that seem to have been also consecrated to Shiva, we find several devoted to Vishnu, and a whole group of Jain temples, the existence of which has only recently been ascertained. Just where the Narbadā forks are the remains of a large Vishnuite erection, of which only some gateways, and a shapeless building formed of the old materials, exist. The former are in the same style of architecture without cement, as the oldest on the Māndhātā hill. In the latter are twenty-four figures of Vishnu and his various avatāras, carved in good style in a close grained green stone, including a large Varāha or Boar avatār, covered with the same panoply of sitting figures as that at Khandwa [Note]. Jain-like sitting figures also appear in the other carvings of Vishnu, illustrating the intimate connection between the two religions. The date 1346 [V.S.] appears on an image of Shiva in the same building, but there are no legible dates on the others. Further down the river bank are some very old remains, formed of huge blocks, and apparently from the carvings, Shivite. Of one, a portion of the dome is standing, formed in the same manner of blocks crossing each other at the angles.

A little way on is a small ravine running down from the hills, called the Rāvana Nālā, in which are some curious remains. First comes a prostrate figure³³ carved in bold relief on four basalt slabs laid end to end. From head to foot it measures eighteen feet and a half length. It is rather rudely executed; it is much weather-worn, and the legs are gone from the thighs to the ankles. It has ten arms,

³³ Imp. to note.

all apparently holding clubs and pendent skulls, but only one head, one foot rests on a smaller prostrate human figure, in which also are fastened the tiger-like claws of a small figure on the left. A scorpion is carved on the large figure, and rat is sculptured on the slab near his right side. The people call it Rāvaṇa,³⁴ the demon who carried off Sita, the wife of Rama, but it is questionable if statues are ever erected to him, nor have the scorpion and a rat, it is believed to do with the story of the Rāmāyaṇa. The figure was intended to be erected in a mammoth temple, which never advanced far towards completion.

The adjoining bed of the ravine is strewn with huge blocks, rough-hewn and slightly carved in some places. They are from ten to fifteen feet in length, and about two feet and a half square; a few intended for uprights are partially cut into polygons and circles. A number of blocks, shaped like crosses, are also to be seen. They are quite rough, five and six inches across each limb into the four projections being of equal size--cubes of one foot nine inches. They were evidently intended to be cut into the bracket capitals of the temple. It cannot but occur to an observer how closely some of these resemble the so called Christian cross recently discovered in the Godavari valley, figured in the proceedings of the Asiatic Society;³⁵ and had any of the huge blocks erected in their places, how easy it would have been to make out of them the remains of a Druidical circle.

Number of these stones from this nālā appear to have been removed to build the modern town of Māndhātā. The dry bed of the Narbadā, near the fork, is strewn with them, as if they had fallen out of boats in attempt to transport them during floods. It may be conjectured that the figure is some form of Bhairava or some other of Shiva's sanguinary developments. Rāvaṇa should have twenty arms and ten heads, and if, to save labour they divided the arms by two, at least they should have done the same by his heads and given him five instead of one. resume

The most curious of all the remains along this branch of the river is the group of Jain temples. They cover an elevation overlooking, but a little retired from, the river. The building nearest the figure just described appears rather to be a monastery than a temple, It may be described as a quadrangle, measuring outside 53 feet east and west by 43 ½ north and south. The western extremity is, however, rounded off at the corners, open so as to make a sort of bow-face towards the river. In the centre is an open courtyard 23 ½ feet by 14 feet. The whole of the rest, except in three places, had been roofed by flat stone slabs, resting on numerous carved capitals, which differ only in the style of ornamentation from those of the neighbouring old Hindu temples.

³⁴ A footnote on the word Ravan appears at the end of this article.

³⁵ Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, No. V, 1868..

There are four main rows of these pillars running round the building, and they stand about ten feet apart. They are also ten feet high, and the building is therefore wholly wanting in external architectural effect. But the three spots now uncovered were evidently at one time covered by domes or spires. Two of these were of small diameter, on either side of the main entrance, at the eastern end of the building. Of one of these a portion is still standing, and it seems to have been of a ribbed pyramidal shape. The third must have been a large dome, over an octagonal opening in the centre of the western or rounded end of the building. It appears to have been built of large flat blocks, some of which are still *in situ*. The building appears to have been closed by walls on all sides except that toward the river. The eastern wall is still complete. The carving is mostly in the form of circles of foliage scapp, quadrated lozenges, and variations on the square, polygonal, and circular sections of the pillars. It is all done in the same yellow sandstone as the Hindu temples, and is of greatly inferior execution to the Jain remains of Khandwā. The building seems to have been left almost entirely devoid of external ornament. To the right of the eastern entrance have been two chambers projecting into the building and immediately under the small spires already mentioned. That to the left is, with its spire, in ruins. In that to the right the writer found a greatly mutilated image of one of the Tirthankaras, but neither on it, nor anywhere in the building, was there any trace of an inscription.

Immediately to the right and left of the doorway, on entering, are two figures carved on slabs about two feet in height. That to the left might be taken to Bhawānī, the consort of Shiva, with her tiger and usual accompaniments, except that she has a sort of corona or canopy of radiating foliage, and holds in one of her four hands a sort of tripple-knotted rope, both of which emblems are seen in Jain carvings. That to the right, is palpably an adaptation of a Tirthankara to Shivite ideas, and may be considered a most curious exemplification of the proneness of the later Jains to adopt the Hindu mythology of the sect that happened to be most in fashion in their neighbourhood. It is a pronouncedly naked (Digambara) figure, with a single cord round the waist, and pendent ends, which alone would stamp it as Jain. It has also large circular ear-rings and plain round anklets. It is standing in an easy attitude, one leg encircled by a long loop seemingly part of a snake, which also passes along the left side, through the left hand, and up behind the head, where it ends in three-hooded snake heads, forming a canopy over the head. So far it might all be Jain (serpent making it out as Pārśvanātha) but beyond this it has four hands one occupied, as stated, by the snake, while two hold a sword and buckler, and the fourth Shiva's drum or hour-glass (damaru). These and the Tirthankara already mentioned seem to be the only image now left in the building, though the usual Jain figures are carved all over the ornamentation of this and the other two

buildings now to be mentioned It should be added that this building is erected on platform of basalt blocks of five or six feet high.

A little to the north of the last building is the second, a great part of which is in ruin. This ruin seems to have been the temple proper, and to have been formed of a pyramidal shape with numerous smaller spires. The building still standing is its anterior porch, closely resembling that of Āmwā near Ajanthā, figured in Fergusson's Architecture, vol II, p.626 at the plinth extends much further out all around, forming in fact a wide open terrace about sixty feet square in front of the porch, and cut down the centre into a long flight of steps. In form it is a square of fifteen feet and a half, worked into an octagon by large slabs thrown across the corners, on which appears to have rested the dome now quite gone. From each side of the square projects a recess or alcove about six feet square, at each angle is a carved pillar, the intervals being filled up with dressed sandstone blocks. The pillars are richer than those in the monastery, and the ceiling in particular appears to have been exceedingly richly carved in concentric circular patterns of foliage. The main entrance is to the east, opposite the steps. The northern alcove is closed by a wall; and in it the writer found a headless sitting image of a Tīrthankara, carved in the same green stone as images in the Vishnuite temple, already mentioned. It bears a Sanskrit inscription on the pedestal, stating it to be Sambhunath. It has not yet been properly deciphered, but the date appears to be illegible. It is very correctly carved, but does not appear to be of any very great age.

Probably all these green stone images were brought from a distance long after the erection of the temples in which they stand. The recess in the southern face may have been either a doorway or another image chamber, and is now quite ruined. The doorway from the porch into the ruined shrine is covered with ornamental carving, chiefly sitting female figure like that on the left of the entrance to the monastery, and friezes of elephant heads, and figures of goats with human heads. No doubt the most interesting part of the building is the shrine, now buried beneath the ruins of its dome.

The third building is merely a small temple, nineteen feet square, built on the top of a pyramid of basalt blocks, about twenty-five feet high, and with very steep sides. The dome must have been a very high one, judging from the quantity of ruins, and it appears to have had no porch of any sort. It has an image recess in the southern face, which is now, however, empty. The sitting figures all over its doorways and other carvings are precisely similar to those in the two larger buildings. It is probable that these buildings date from the same period as the other Jain remains of Nimar at Wūn, Burwāni Hasūd, and Khandwā, viz. A.D. 1166 to 1293; but excepting those at Wun they are the only remains of the sort at all in

decent preservations. The hills adjoining these temples are like Māndhātā itself--covered with the remains of habitation and walls of stone, and nowhere is there any trace of the use of lime in the building. It seems therefore that the whole of the section of the Narbadā valley, in which Māndhātā stands, was at one time the seat of populous community. It is now unoccupied except by the attendants of the temples and the Raja's people.

The great fair of Omkārijī takes place on the fifteenth of Kārtik (end of October and beginning of November), and 10,000 to 15,000 people usually attend, with numerous shops and traders from all parts of the country. The place is easily accessible from the Barwāni travelers bungalow, from which it is about seven miles distant by a good bridle-road. It is said to be increasing in importance. The southern bank, which was wholly waste at the close of last century, is now site of numerous temples and several monasteries of Godar (whence its name of Godarpur). Nirānjanī, Dasnāmī and other devotees built and endowed by Ahilya Bai and other Maratha chiefs, and Maharaja Holkar has recently intimated his intention of founding another.

The Māndhātā Brāhmaṇas fully rely on the accomplishment of a pro-phyecy contained in the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa (and copied of course into the local gospel), that after 5000 years of the Kaliyuga the sanctity of the Gaṅgā river will expire, and the Narbadā will be left without a rival. There are now only thirty one years left of this period, but it remains to be seen whether the Gangetic Brāhmaṇs will not discover some means of averting such a disastrous extinction of the profitable "Māhātmya" of their river.

Contributed by Captain J. Forsyth, Deputy Commissioner of Nimar.

Regarding this figure, Captain T. Forsyth, the writer of the article, has contributed the following additional information :--

"On a second visit to Māndhātā and a careful examination of the figure, I am satisfied that it represents the consort of Śiva in her more terrible form of Mahākālī. It is certainly a female, has a girdle and necklace of snakes, and is either eight or ten-handed, it is not very clear which. The sword, bell, mace, skull, and head held by the hair in her hands, point, I think, clearly to the dread goddess Kālī."—T.F

श्री - ओंकारेश्वर - मान्धाता - गौरव

विष्णुराम सनावद्या

माधवपुस्तकमाला

(मध्य-प्रदेश) [1971]

मध्यप्रदेश के अन्तर्गत जिला पूर्व नीमाड में खंडवा से इन्दौर होती हुई अजमेर जाने वाली बी. बी. एण्ड सी. आय? [अब पश्चिम] रेलवे की शाखा पर मोरटक्का रेलवे स्टेशन से लगभग ७ मील की दूरी पर "श्री ओंकारेश्वर मान्धाता" भारत प्रसिद्ध तीर्थ स्थान है। भारत के कोने कोने से यहाँ यात्री दर्शन के लिए आते रहते हैं।

मोरटक्का से मान्धाता तक सौन्दर्यपूर्ण पहाड़ी रास्ता है। मोरटक्का से मान्धाता तक जाने के लिए मोटरों की काफी सुविधा है। नाव द्वारा भी पहुँच सकते हैं। श्रीओंकारेश्वर-मान्धाता का स्थान जितना पवित्र और गौरवशाली है, उतना ही रमणीक भी है। चाँदनी रात और वर्षा के समय यहाँ का दृश्य देखने के योग्य होता है।

यहाँ पर नर्मदा का पाट अधिक न होकर जल की गहराई बहुत अधिक है। नर्मदा के बीच में आने से श्री ओंकारेश्वर मान्धाता के दो भाग हो गए हैं। एक भाग को अमरेश्वर कहते हैं और दूसरे भाग को मान्धाता। फिर अमरेश्वर के दो भाग हुए हैं, एक का नाम ब्रह्मपुरी तथा दूसरे का नाम विष्णुपुरी है। मान्धाता का दूसरा नाम शिवपुरी या ओंकारपुरी है। इस प्रकार ब्रह्मपुरी, विष्णुपुरी, और शिवपुरी ये तीनों मिलकर "श्री ओंकारेश्वर - मान्धाता" महान् तीर्थ बना है।

नर्मदा के दोनों तट पर विशाल घाट बने हुए हैं। इन घाटों की शोभा देखकर दर्शक को प्रसन्नता होती है। शिवपुरी का घाट प्रातः स्मरणीया, पुण्यश्लोका देवी श्री अहिल्याबाई होल्कर का बनवाया हुआ है। श्री ओंकारेश्वर - मान्धाता की स्थापना के सम्बन्ध में पुराणों में वर्णन है कि इक्ष्वाकु के कुल में उत्पन्न राजा युवनाश्व³⁶ की अनेक रानियाँ थीं। किन्तु एक भी सन्तान नहीं थी। इसलिए सन्तान प्राप्ति के लिए राजा ने दान धर्म, यज्ञ आदि बहुत किए परन्तु राजा को कुछ भी लाभ नहीं हुआ। अन्त में वह निराश होकर अपना राज्य मन्त्री को देकर वन में तपश्चर्या के लिए चला गया।

³⁶ There are many errors in the text.

कुछ दिन राजा ने भृगु ऋषि के आश्रम में निवास किया। एक रात्रि को जब भृगु आदि ऋषि और उनके शिष्य प्रगाढ निद्रा में सो रहे थे राजा को बहुत प्यास लगी। तब उसने यज्ञवेदी में रखे हुए कलश का जल पी लिया। दूसरे दिन भृगु ऋषि ने जब कलश को देखा तो वह खाली मिला। खोज करने पर उनको विदित हुआ कि राजा ने अज्ञानवश कलश का पानी पी लिया है। भृगु ऋषि बहुत चिन्तित हो गये और उन्होंने राजा से कहा कि हे राजन् ! तुमने यह बहुत बुरा काम किया है। कलश का मन्त्रयुक्त जल पुत्र प्राप्ति कर देने वाला था, वह तुमने पी लिया। अतएव अब तुम्हारे उदर में गर्भ रहेगा। अन्त में भृगु ऋषि ने जो कहा वही हुआ। अब राजा को चिन्ता हुई कि नवजात शिशु को दूध कहाँ से पिलाया जाय।

इतने में राजा इन्द्र³⁷ वहाँ आये और बोले "मां धास्यति"³⁸ अर्थात् मुझे धायेगा। तदनुसार राजा इन्द्र ने बालक के हाथ का अङ्गूठा उस के मुँह में देकर जीवन दिया। 'मां धास्यति' शब्द से ही उस बालक का नाम मान्धाता पडा। आगे चलकर यथासमय इस मान्धाता राजा ने वर्तमान श्री ओंकारेश्वर - मान्धाता स्थान पर श्री ओंकार स्वरूप शिवजी का पूजन कर "श्री ओंकारेश्वर - मान्धाता" नाम से ही इस तीर्थ की स्थापना की। राजा मान्धाता एक महान् दानी और शूरवीर था।

इतिहास [!] में लिखा है कि सन् ११६५ ई में भारतसिंह चौहान ने नाथू भील से इस स्थान को जीत लिया। तब से अभी तक उसी के वंशधर यहाँ के प्रबन्धक हैं। इनका निवासस्थान मान्धाता की पहाड़ी पर बना हुआ है।

श्री ओंकारेश्वर-मान्धाता भारत के बारह ज्योतिर्लिंगों में से एक ज्योतिर्लिंग होने से यह महान् धार्मिक और परम पवित्र स्थान है। यहाँ मन्दिर और धर्मशालायें काफी हैं। अमरेश्वर की बस्ती पहाड़ों के बीच में है और मान्धाता की बस्ती खड़ी पहाड़ी पर स्थित है जो नर्मदा और कावेरी के बीच द्वीप सी खड़ी है। पद्मपुराण में इस पहाड़ी का उल्लेख वैदूर्यमणि पर्वत नाम से किया है। यह पहाड़ी स्वयम् श्री ओंकार रूप सी है [!] और खास श्री ओंकारजी का मन्दिर इसी पर बना हुआ है। कावेरी नदी नर्मदा की ही शाखा [!] है। यह श्री ओंकारेश्वर - मान्धाता की पहाड़ी की उत्तर सीमा को बनाती हुई पश्चिम में नर्मदाजी में मिल गई है। जहाँ से यह नदी नर्मदाजी से निकलती है [?], वहाँ पर कुबेर भंडार नामक पवित्र स्थान है। इस स्थान पर कुबेर के स्थापन किये हुए श्री कुबेरेश्वर महादेव हैं ***। पुराणों में इस स्थान की बहुत महिमा गायी गयी है। मत्स्यपुराण में लिखा है कि यहाँ पर कुबेर को सौ वर्ष की तपस्या के पश्चात् शिव का वरदान प्राप्त हुआ और वह यक्षों का राजा बन गया। जो पुरुष यहाँ संगम [?] में स्नान करके शिव का पूजन करता है, उसको अश्वमेध यज्ञ का फल

³⁷ He was the king of gods, and not merely a king. Devarāja would be better.

³⁸ The correct word is Mām Dhātā.

मिलता है और अन्त में रुद्रलोक की प्राप्ति होती है। अग्निपुराण तथा कूर्म-पुराण में भी इस स्थान की महिमा का वर्णन है।

अमरेश्वर की अपेक्षा मान्धाता का प्राकृतिक दृश्य अधिक सुन्दर है। महत्त्व के सभी देवस्थान, मान्धाता का राजमहल, धर्मशाला, दुकानें, मकान आदि पहाड़ी के ढलुवे भाग में बने होने के कारण विशेष शोभाशाली दिखाई देते हैं। पहाड़ी के ऊपर जङ्गल में भी देव-स्थान, फाटक, मठ आदि के अवशेष हैं।³⁹

शिवशतरुद्रसंहिता में लिखा है कि श्री ओंकारजी शिव के अवतार हैं। श्री ओंकारेश्वर का मन्दिर ऊँचे स्थान पर स्थित होने से दूर से दिखाई देता है। इस मन्दिर में स्थापित शिव-लिङ्ग स्वयंभू है और इसके आसपास चारों ओर पानी एक सतह तक सदा भरा रहता है। शिवलिङ्ग के पास पार्वती तथा गणपति की मूर्तियाँ हैं। मन्दिर में दिन रात घी का दीपक जलता रहता है। श्री ओंकारेश्वरजी के मन्दिर के दूसरे मञ्जिल पर महाकालेश्वर की मूर्ति है जो ठीक गुम्बज के नीचे है। मन्दिर के ऊपर से आसपास का और नर्मदा का दृश्य बहुत ही सुन्दर मालूम होता है।

श्री ओंकारेश्वर जी के मन्दिर के समीप अविमुक्तेश्वर, केदारेश्वर, गणपति, कालिका आदि देवी देवताओं के मन्दिर हैं और श्री ओंकारेश्वरजी के मन्दिर के नीचे नर्मदा का कोटितीर्थ नाम का पक्का घाट है जहाँ यात्री दर्शन के लिए जाने से पहिले स्नान करते हैं। कोटितीर्थ के पश्चिम में चक्रतीर्थ नाम का दूसरा घाट है। यहाँ से परिक्रमा प्रारम्भ होती है। कोटितीर्थ और चक्रतीर्थ के मध्य में राजा मान्धाता का मन्दिर है। परिक्रमा में खेडापति हनुमान्, तिलभाण्डेश्वर, केदारेश्वर, ऋणमुक्तेश्वर, गौरी सोमनाथ, सिद्धेश्वर, कुन्तीमाता, भीमभैरव, पाण्डव मन्दिर आदि के दर्शन होते हैं। गौरी सोमनाथ का मन्दिर 'मामा भाञ्जा महादेव' नाम से प्रसिद्ध है। कहते हैं कि पहले गौरी सोमनाथ शिवलिङ्ग सफेद था। और उसमें देखने वालों को अपना पूर्वजन्म तथा भावी जन्म का चित्र दीखता था। परन्तु जब मुगल बादशाह औरंगजेब ने अपना घृणित रूप देखा तब क्रोधित होकर इस शिवलिङ्ग को जला दिया। इससे इस शिवलिङ्ग का श्याम वर्ण हो गया है। मन्दिर के पास एक २० फीट ऊँचा स्तम्भ है। छोटी परिक्रमा करने वाले यात्री यहाँ से ही चक्रतीर्थ वापिस लौट आते हैं। बड़ी परिक्रमा करने वालों को आगे सिद्धेश्वर या सिद्धनाथ महादेव का मन्दिर लगता है। इस मन्दिर में अर्जुन और भीम की विशाल मूर्तियाँ हैं।

ब्रह्मपुरी और विष्णुपुरी में अमरेश्वर के दो विभाग दो टीलों पर बसे हैं। दोनों के बीच में कपिलधारा नाम की छोटी जल धारा बहती हुई आकर गोमुख से नर्मदा में गिरती है। इस स्थान का नाम कपिला संगम है। इस संगम के ऊपर कुछ चढ़ाई के बाद पिंगलदेव, अविमुक्तेश्वर,

³⁹ This is a very spirited account based on personal observation, but from the literary point of view quite poor indeed. We have done some editorial improvement.

करतेध्वर आदि के मन्दिर हैं। कूर्मपुराण में लिखा है कि ब्रह्मेध्वर शिवलिङ्ग की स्थापना स्वयं ब्रह्मा ने की थी। कावेरी और नर्मदा के संगम में स्नान करने से ब्रह्मलोक प्राप्त होता है। विष्णुपुरी में भगवान् विष्णु, मार्कण्डेध्वर, चन्द्रमोलेध्वर, कपिलेध्वर, काशीविश्वेध्वर आदि के मन्दिर हैं।

नर्मदा के किनारे जल के बीच में मार्कण्डेय शिला नामक चट्टान है। जिस पर यम यातना से छुटकारा पाने के लिए यात्री लोग लेटते हैं। मान्धाता के उत्तर में कावेरी के उस पार च्यवनाश्रम, गयाशिला और दिगम्बर जैन समाज का प्रसिद्ध सिद्धवरकूट सिद्धक्षेत्र है। मान्धाता के पूर्व में पशुपतेध्वर, विष्णु के चौबीस अवतार आदि स्थान हैं।

प्रति वर्ष कार्तिक मास में यहाँ बहुत बड़ा मेला लगता है। मेले के समय हजारों यात्री दर्शन के लिए आते हैं। यहाँ आवागमन की और ठहरने की बहुत सुविधा है। मैंने स्वयं इस परम पवित्र पुण्य स्थान में लगातार तीन दिन तक निवास कर बहुत ही सुख और शान्ति का अनुभव किया है। जो भी भाग्यशाली इस परम पावन तीर्थ की यात्रा कर भगवान् श्री ओंकारेध्वर जी के दर्शन करेंगे उनको सचमुच अपार आनन्द और महान् पुण्य प्राप्त होगा।

शुभम् - भूयात्।⁴⁰

⁴⁰ An eye witness account; nor just based on hearing. Quite valuable.

Kāverī

East Nimar District Gazetteer, p. 12:

The Kāverī rises from the ridge diagonally traversing Khandwa tahsīl. It runs into the Narmadā some little way above [from the point of view of the flow of the waters] the island of Māndhātā. Local belief ⁴¹ is that the waters of Kāverī here at its [first real] confluence do not mix with the waters of the Narmadā, but flow across them and around the north side of the island, and then mix with the waters of the Narmadā below the island. The belief has thus attributed greater sanctity to this confluence than the real one, and pious devotees take dip here and not at the real confluence.⁴²

[All this is only a **dantakathā** as the *Darshanika* beautifully puts it.]



Kaveri merges into Narmada - Satellite Image

The legend of the River Kaveri. She is not accepted right away. Goes her own way independently. Flows further on unmixed. Finally, at a little distance away from the original meeting point, she is accepted and then gets united. A rare natural phenomenon in the world indeed. Most of the descriptions are meant for the simple folks—**bhole bhāle rāha calate loga--** to extract money from them by exciting their religious sentiments. There is very little authentic, scientific, verifiable, exact description. Most of the writings are merely a copy-cat performance.⁴³ The footnote here does not make any sense!!!

⁴¹ Only a tradition? Or a verified truth? A fact or fiction?

⁴² We believe: Accessibility may be the primary factor.

⁴³ . Kaveri sangam Māhāmahātmy varṇan in Skand Purāṇa, ch. 84, pp.372-73. The description ????

Then when cajoled and persuaded she rejoins the Narmada about 2 miles below. The hilly island so formed in between is roughly 1-½ miles long and about ¾ mile wide. It is called Vaidūrya Maṇi Parvata. The Narmada is a dividing line between the Vindhya Mountain in the north and the Satpura to the South. The channel north of the island (Kāverī) is shallower and wider, while the Narmada to the south is narrow and deep, forming a silent pool full of fish and in former times with alligators too. The depth of the river below the bridge is taken by the engineers to be about 250 deep.

कावेरीसङ्गममाहात्म्यवर्णनम्⁴⁴

युधिष्ठिर उवाच :-

कावेरीति च विख्याता त्रिषु लोकेषु सत्तम ।
 माहात्म्यं श्रोतुमिच्छामि तस्या मार्कण्ड तत्त्वतः ॥ १ ॥
 कीदृशं दर्शनं तस्याः फलं स्पर्शेऽथवा विभो
 स्नाने जाप्येऽथवा दान उपवासे तथा मुने ॥ २ ॥
 कथयस्व महाभाग कावेरीसङ्गमे फलम् ।
 धर्मः श्रुतोऽथ दृष्टो वा कथितो वा कृतोऽपि वा ॥ ३ ॥
 अनुमोदितो वा विप्रेन्द्र पुनातीति श्रुतं मया ।
 यथा धर्मप्रसङ्गे तु मुने धर्मोऽपि जायते ॥ ४ ॥
 स्वर्गश्च नरकश्चैव इत्येवं वैदिकी श्रुतिः ॥ ५ ॥

श्रीमार्कण्डेय उवाच :-

साधु साधु महाभाग यत्पृष्टोऽहं त्वयाऽधुना ।
 शृणुष्वैकमना भूत्वा कावेरीफलमुत्तमम् ॥ ६ ॥
 अस्ति यक्षो महासत्त्वः कुबेरो नाम विश्रुतः ।
 सोऽपि तीर्थप्रभावेण राजन्यक्षाधिपोऽभवत् ॥ ७ ॥
 तच्छृणुष्व विधानेन भक्त्या परमया नृप ।
 सिद्धिं प्राप्तो महाभाग कावेरीसङ्गमेन तु ॥ ८ ॥
 कावेर्या नर्मदायास्तु सङ्गमे लोकविश्रुते ।
 तत्र स्नात्वा शुचिर्भूत्वा कुबेरः सत्त्वविक्रमः ॥ ९ ॥
 विधिवन्वियमं कृत्वा शास्त्रयुक्त्या नरोत्तम ।

⁴⁴ Skanda Purana, Nag ed. Also Bareli ed. and Mora, Calcutta ed.

आराधयन्महादेवमेकचित्तः सनातनम् ॥ १० ॥
एकाहारोऽवसन् मासं तथ षष्ठाहकालिकः ।
पक्षोपवासो न्यवसत्कञ्चित्कालं नृपोत्तम ॥ ११ ॥
मूलशाकफलैश्चान्यं कालं नयति बुद्धिमान् ।
किञ्चित्कालं वसंस्तत्र तीर्थे शैवालभोजनः ॥ १२ ॥
पराकेणानयत् कालं कृच्छ्रेणापि च मानद ।
चान्द्रायणेन चाप्यन्यमन्यं वाप्यम्बुभोजनः ॥ १३ ॥
एवं तत्र नरश्रेष्ठ कामरागविवर्जितः ।
स्थितो वर्षशतं सागं कर्षयन्स्वं तथा वपुः ॥ १४ ॥
ततो वर्षशतस्यान्ते देवदेवो महेश्वरः ।
तुष्टुस्तु परया भक्त्या तमुवाच हसन्निव ॥ १५ ॥
भो भो यक्ष महासत्त्व वरं वरय सुव्रत ।
परितुष्टोऽस्मि ते भक्त्या तव दास्ये तथेप्सितम् ॥ १६ ॥
यदि तुष्टोऽसि देवेश उमया सह शङ्कर ।
अद्यप्रभृति सर्वेषां यक्षाणामधिपो भवे ॥ १७ ॥
अक्षयश्चाव्ययश्चैव तव भक्तिपुरस्सरः ।
धर्मे मतिं च मे नित्यं ददस्व परमेश्वर ॥ १८ ॥

ईश्वर उवाच:-

यत्त्वया प्रार्थितं सर्वं फलं धर्मस्य तत्तथा ।
इत्येवमुक्त्वा तं तत्र जगामादर्शनं हरः ॥ १९ ॥
सोऽपि स्नात्वा विधानेन सन्तर्प्य पितृदेवताः ।
आमन्त्रयित्वा तत्तीर्थं कृतार्थश्च गृहं ययौ ॥ २० ॥
पूजितस्तत्र यक्षैस्तु सोऽभिषिक्तो विधानतः ।
चकार विपुलं तत्र राज्यमीप्सितमुत्तमम् ॥ २१ ॥

तत्र चान्ये सुराः सिद्धा यक्षगन्धर्वकिन्नराः ।
गणाश्चाप्सरसां तत्र ऋषयश्च तथाऽनघ ॥ २२ ॥
कावेरीसङ्गमं तेन सर्वपापहरं विदुः ।
स्वर्गाणामपि सर्वेषां द्वारमेतद्युधिष्ठिर ॥ २३ ॥
ते धन्यास्ते महात्मानस्तेषां जन्म सुजीवितम् ।
कावेरीसङ्गमे स्नात्वा यैर्दत्तं हि तिलोदकम् ॥ २४ ॥
दश पूर्वे परे तात मातृतः पितृतस्तथा ।
पितरः पितामहास्तेन उद्धृता नरकार्णवात् ॥ २५ ॥

तस्मात्सर्वप्रयत्नेन तत्र स्नायीत मानवः ।
 अर्चयेदीद्वरं देवं यदीच्छेच्छाश्वतीं गतिम् ॥ २६ ॥
 कावेरीसङ्गमे राजन् स्नानदानार्चनं नरैः ।
 कृतं भक्त्या नरश्रेष्ठ अश्वमेधाधिकं फलम् ॥ २७ ॥
 होमेन चाक्षयः स्वर्गो जपादायुर्विवर्धते ।
 ध्यानतो नित्यमायाति पदं शिवकलात्मकम् ॥ २८ ॥
 अग्निप्रवेशं यः कुर्यात् तस्मिंस्तीर्थे नरेश्वर ।
 अग्निलोके वसेत् तावत् यावदाभूतसंप्लवम् ॥ २९ ॥
 अनाशकं तु यः कुर्यात् तस्मिंस्तीर्थे नराधिप ॥
 तस्य पुण्यफलं यद्वै तच्छृणुष्व नरोत्तम ॥ ३० ॥
 गन्धर्वाप्सरसङ्कीर्णं विमाने सूर्यसन्निभे ।
 वीज्यमानो वरस्त्रीभिर्देवतैः सह मोदते ॥ ३१ ॥
 षष्टिवर्षसहस्राणि षष्टिवर्षशतानि च ।
 क्रीडते रुद्रलोकस्थस्तदन्ते भुवि चागतः ॥ ३२ ॥
 भोगवान्दानशीलश्च जायते पृथिवीपतिः ।
 आधिशोकविनिर्मुक्तो जीवेच्च शरदां शतम् ॥ ३३ ॥
 एवं गुणगणाकीर्णा कावेरी सा सरिभृष ।
 त्रिषु लोकेषु विख्याता नर्मदासङ्गमे सदा ॥ ३४ ॥
 जितवाक्कायचित्ताश्च ध्येयध्यानरतास्तथा ।
 कावेरीसङ्गमे तात तेऽपि मोक्षमवाप्नुयुः ॥ ३५ ॥
 शृणु तेऽन्यत् प्रवक्ष्यामि आश्चर्यं नृपसत्तम ।
 त्रिषु लोकेषु का त्वन्या दृश्यते सरिता समा ॥ ३६ ॥
 लब्धं यैर्नर्मदातोयं ये च कुर्युः प्रदक्षिणम् ।
 ये पिबन्ति जलं तत्र ते पुण्या नात्र संशयः ॥ ३७ ॥
 न तेषां सन्ततिच्छेदो दश जन्मानि पञ्च च ।
 तेषां पापं विलीयेत हिमं सूर्योदये यथा ॥ ३८ ॥
 गङ्गायमुनसङ्गे वै यत् फलं लभते नरः ।
 तत् फलं लभते मर्त्यः कावेरीस्नानमाचरन् ॥ ३९ ॥
 भौमे तु भूतजायोगे व्यतीपाते च संक्रमे ।
 राहुसोमसमायोगे तदेवाष्टगुणं स्मृतम् ॥ ४० ॥
 अशीतिश्च यवाः प्रोक्ता गङ्गायमुनसङ्गमे ।
 कावेरीनर्मदायोगे तदेवाष्टगुणं स्मृतम् ॥ ४१ ॥
 गङ्गा षष्टिसहस्रैस्तु क्षेत्रपालैः प्रपूज्यते ।
 तदध्वैरन्यतीर्थानि रक्ष्यन्ते नात्र संशयः ॥ ४२ ॥

अमरेष्टरे तु सरितां ये योगाः परिकीर्तिताः ।
ते त्वशीतिसहस्रैस्तु क्षेत्रपालैस्तु रक्षिताः ॥ ४३ ॥
तथामरेष्टरे याम्ये लिङ्गं वै चपलेष्टरम् ।⁴⁵
द्वितीयं चण्डहस्ताख्यं द्वे लिङ्गे तीर्थरक्षके ॥ ४४ ॥
शिवेन स्थापिते पूर्वं कावेर्याद्यभिरक्षके ।
लक्षणे रक्षिता देवी नर्मदा बहुकल्पगा ॥ ४५ ॥
धनुषां षष्ट्यभियुतैः पुरुषैरीशयोजितैः ।
ॐकारशतसाहस्रैः पर्वतश्चाभिरक्षितः ॥ ४६ ॥
अन्यदेशकृतं पापमस्मिन् क्षेत्रे विनश्यति ।
अस्मिंस्तीर्थे कृतं पापं वज्रलेपो भविष्यति ॥ ४७ ॥
एषा ते कथिता तात कावेरी सरितां वरा ।
रुद्रदेहसमुत्पन्ना तेन पुण्या सरिद्वरा ॥ ४८ ॥

इति श्रीस्कान्दे महापुराणे एकाशीतिसाहस्र्यां संहितायां पञ्चमे आवन्त्यखण्डे रेवाखण्डे
नर्मदामाहात्म्ये कावेरीसङ्गममाहात्म्यवर्णनं नामैकोनत्रिंशोऽध्यायः ॥

⁴⁵ This needs further study.

Māndhātā (22° 14' N 76° 17' E)

East Nimar District Gazetteer : pp. 468 ff.⁴⁶

Considered to be one of the most sacred places of pilgrimage, Māndhātā is a village in the Khandwa Tehsil. It is about 47 miles (75.2 kms) north-west of Khandwa. Its nearest railway station is Omkareshwar-Road on metre gauge Western Railway, connecting Ajmer and Khandwa. The distance is 7 miles (11.2 kms.) from the station.



The village is situated partly on the south bank of the Narmadā and partly on an island⁴⁷ in the river. The island⁴⁷ is roughly about a mile and half long [imp. to note] and is composed of lofty hills, divided by a valley which runs from near the summit at the eastern end down to the water's edge at the western extremity.

⁴⁶ More authentic than many other writings.

⁴⁷ Nimar District Gazetteer, p. 239.



To the east the hills fall in precipitous cliffs for about 400 or 500 feet to the river below, while to the west they tail off gradually. The southern bank of the Narmadā opposite Māndhātā is equally precipitous and between them the river forms deep and narrow channel. The rocks on both sides of the river are of beautiful sand-stone formations. The ruins of the village show that once the place was a considerable town. [To be noted] There is a controversy among scholars in regard to the identification with the celebrated city of Mahishmati. Some scholars identify it with Mahishmati while other scholars assert that Maheshwar is the ancient town of Mahishmati.⁴⁸



The main temple at Māndhātā, which attracts thousands of pilgrims from all parts of the country, is dedicated to Omkareshwara, and is situated on the northern side of the river Narmadā on the island. The temple contains a *lingam* to which

⁴⁸ H.D. Sankalia, Excavations at Maheshwar and Navadatoli, pp. 1-15.

Māndhātā owes its celebrity. [The great columns of the temple are old and belong to an earlier structure] and the present temple, therefore, is of no great antiquity.

Curiously enough, the *lingam* is not placed as usual either in line with the front door of the temple or under the spire or pinnacle of the temple. This arrangement which is not found elsewhere cannot be explained.⁴⁹ The *lingam* cell actually is to the one side and is not seen except from the remote end of the hall. It seems that under the spire in the sanctum there was once some original deity, which was probably covered by a wall, subsequently erected to hide it for reasons not known.[?] The *lingam* is held to be most sacred one, being one of the twelve *jyotirlingas* of the country. There is a cell around the *lingam*, filled with water. Whatever may be the quantity of water poured into it, the water level would always remain constant. Occasionally air bubbles come to the surface to signify the deity's satisfaction with the pilgrims' offerings. Barren women desiring children often imprint Swastika mark on the walls of this four-storeyed [or five?] temple and tie a string round the image of a goddess inside, as a token of vow. [imp to note. Appears elsewhere too.]

The Bhilālā Raos of Māndhātā, hereditary custodians of the great shrine of Shiva at Māndhātā, have preserved traditions of the family, according to which their ancestor Bharat [Bhārata] Singh was a Chauhan Rajput, who took Māndhātā from Nathu Bhil in A.D. 1165. [An imp. date to remember] Bharat Singh probably married Nathu Bhil's daughter and founded a Bhilālā family. He also restored the worship of Shiva to the island, which was *not accessible* [stress added].

At the top of the hill and above the famous temple of Omkareshwar is situated a temple said to be dedicated to Siddheswara.⁵⁰ The scholars assume that the temple was probably left unfinished, but was intended to be a very fine building. As it stands, it consists of the square sanctum with a doorway in each of its four sides, its walls having been carried up almost to the springing of the spire.

⁴⁹ Even if we make a hypothesis that the two parts of the temple were not constructed at one and the same time?

⁵⁰ Nimar District Gazetteer, p. 241.



It appears that the spire was not completed, though many dressed stones lie about prepared for it. In later times, the temple was partially completed by adding to it an unsightly dome in Muhammadan fashion, which was later removed by the Government and covered with a flat roof designed to be more in keeping with old work.

The temple is standing upon the high platform, sides of which are carved with elephants with various position of relief. These are four or five feet high and have been executed with singular correctness and excellence of posture. **Many of these carved slabs disappeared from their original places while the remaining were mutilated long ago.** [emphasis added.]

The central shrine had an entrance on each side with a porch resting on 18 pillars. These are 14 feet high to the architrave and are elaborately carved. But here again, the work appears to have been left unfinished, the architraves alone lying across the tops of the columns. The whole building has been built of heavy blocks of stone put together without mortar with little or no bonding.



To the north of the island stands a temple called that of Gaurī Somanātha. It was long ago rebuilt with lime. The plan is star-shaped, formed by the corners of superimposed square.



The temple contains a gigantic *liṅgam* of smooth black stone, while a *nandi* or bull of similar stone is outside [up or down?] According to a local legend once the color of the *liṅgam* was white. Any one who looked into it intently could see a reflection representing the form which he is to take in his next birth. Once Aurangzeb visited the temple and saw the figure of a pig after gazing into the *liṅgam*. Violently angry with this manifestation, he threw the *liṅgam* into fire. Since then it took a jet-black colour. The temple [is] alleged to have been built by the first king of Māndhātā.

Om : One God Universal

At the western end of the island is situated a shrine Rina-Muktesvara which is not very old.



Besides, there are a number of old temples most of which are in ruins. There are also remains of fortification on the island, of which two gateways with watch-towers are adorned with carvings of Mahākālī and Bhairava.



The general appearance of the Māndhātā island is very picturesque. The rows of houses, shops, temples, and newly built *dharmashālā* standing on terraces carved out of the sides of the hills, with the palace of the former Rajas conspicuous above all the rest, these offer a panorama pleasing the eyes of the visitors. Some

little way above the island, a small river, Kāveri, joins the Narmadā on the southern side and the popular belief is that its waters do not mix with those of the Narmadā, but flow across and round the north side of the island, the Narmadā continuing to the south.

On the southern bank of the river or to the south of the island beyond Narmadā are situated some temples. The important of them is that of Amareśvara. The temple contains four inscriptions on the walls of the portico dated in 1063 [!]A.D.



[Very imp. to note. Contents? *Shiva-Mahimnas stotra* of Pushpadanta. ?] The home page of the Omkareshvara Jyotirlinga Temple Trust says that the *Mahimnastava* has been inscribed on the walls of the temple. If true, this will be the second inscription of this immortal hymn, there being one already on the bank of the River Narmadā itself near Nanded [?] discussed and detailed by W. Norman Brown in his edition of the work.

[Note added 06-12-01: Both are one and the same. More will be added here later. Many statements made earlier have proved to be wrong as more and more reading was done and new facts were discovered. However, we have not yet been able to do much editorial work. These notes are presented here as they were recorded.]

Between the Vaishnava and the Jain temples [beyond the island, in the N.E. direction and on the right bank of Kāverī] is a stream, now locally called Ravananalā [Rāvaṇanālā?] after a gigantic statue 18 feet long and ten-armed lying [NB.] near the nallah. The statue, in fact, is of Mahākālī, the consort of Shiva. She has a girdle and necklace of snakes and holds a sword, mace and skull in her hands. Her stomach is empty to signify her unslaked longing for human victims and has a scorpion carved on it.

[This does not seem to be the proper or original place for this gigantic statue of Mahākālī! Subsequently I read Forsyth. He has provided many satisfying details, authentic and fully explanatory. **Sthito'smi gatasandehah.**]

The southeast end of the island is the cliff [note well] from which the devotees of Bhairava were formerly accustomed to hurl themselves on the rock below. Local tradition was that Bhairava and his consort Kali were accustomed to feed on human flesh. But sometime in the later half of the 12th Century, a worshipper, Daryao Nath,⁵¹ by virtue of his austerities is said to have shut up Kālī in a subterranean cavern and thus removed the fear of pilgrims who abstained from visiting the island. The tradition goes that he also arranged with Bhairava that for the future he should receive human sacrifices at regular intervals and should, therefore, refrain from molesting pilgrims. Accordingly, on the occasion of the annual fair some of his devotees hurled themselves on the rocks in fulfillment of the promise of Daryao Nath. Perhaps the last sacrifice of this kind was witnessed by an English Officer in A. D. 1824.⁵²



Courtesy: Friends of Indore, Pal and Joshi

The village of Māndhātā is wholly dependent on the earning from the pilgrims. The annual fair is held twice there; once in the bright fortnight of

⁵¹ Omkareshwar Darshanika says that he was the presiding priest Gosain and gives detailed description of how the island was captured by the Chauhans from the Bhil chieftain.. There is much more to be written on this topic.

⁵² The sordid details of that human sacrifice, left behind by the Officer, were found by Captain Forsyth among the Nimar records, and are quoted by the latter in his book, *The Highlands of Central India*, p. 181. Our observation: This account is colored by the British superiority complex. They thought that India was their paternal property which will remain as their property for ever. 1824 is not the correct date; it was witnessed in 1822. It was banned or abandoned in 1824.

hKārtika and lasts for 7 days, and again on the occasion of Śivarātri for five days. On both the occasions the place is visited by thousands of pilgrims. On the southern bank it has a number of *dharmashalas*.



Courtesy: Friends of Indore, Pal and Joshi

Māndhātā is now a small village which had a population of 550 in 1961 as against 900 in 1901. It covers an area of 658 acres together with an area of 1884 acres of Godarpura [imp to note. The settlements and temples, etc. located on both banks of Narmadā are collectively called Māndhātā.] The village is electrified and has a Gram Panchayat.

This is the end of ENG.

[This description is outdated. This Gazetteer was published in 1969. Also it seems that it was not revised before it went to the press.]⁵³

We have named the two parts as the North Māndhātā and South Māndhātā.

Archaeological Survey of India.

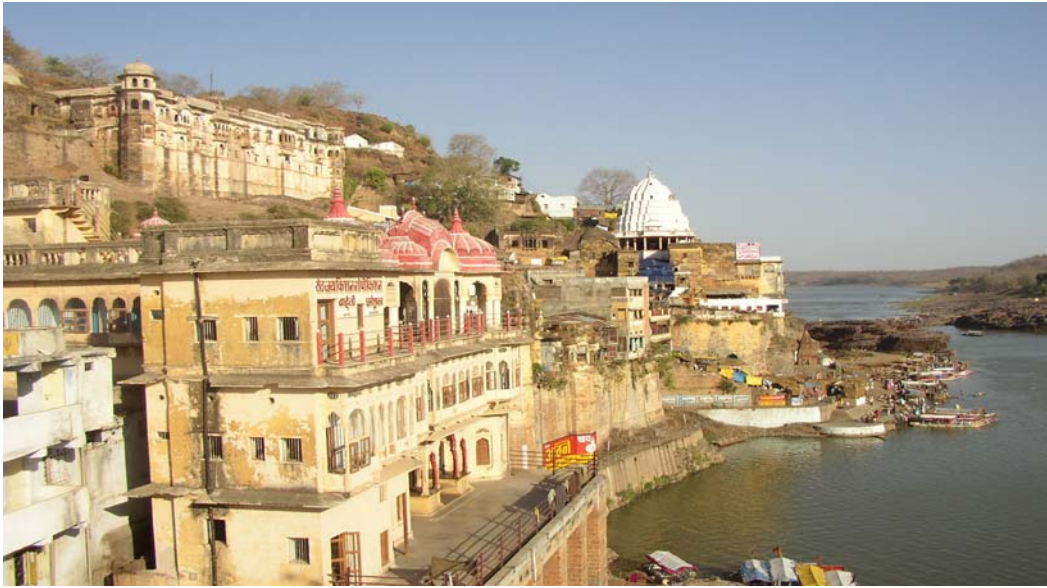
Archaeological Survey Lists: Central Provinces. *Pp. 40-41.*

Henry Cousens' List of Antiquarian remains....Reprinted by Indological Book House, Varanasi,⁵⁴ 1971.

⁵³ It is very sad; very bad.

⁵⁴ Working only for money not for the promotion of true scholarship.

5. **Māndhātā.** On the Narmadā river, 32 [?] miles north by west from Khandwā and about seven miles east of Morakā [!] railway station. As a Hindu place of pilgrimage Māndhātā is famous on account of the presence there of one of the twelve most celebrated *līngas* of Śiva. The town of Māndhātā is built partly upon the south [left] bank of the Narmadā and partly upon an island in the river. The island is, roughly, about a mile and a half long, and is composed of two lofty hills divided by a valley, which runs from near the summit at the eastern end down to the water's edge at the western extremity. These hills join at the eastern end where their sides fall in precipitous cliffs to the river below, the western ends tailing off gradually.



Up the southern face of the south hill is built one-half of the town of Māndhātā, and exceedingly picturesque it is with its rows of houses, temples, shops, and the Raja's palace, conspicuous above all the rest, all built upon terraces scraped out of the rugged sides of the hill. The rest of the hills are covered with jungle, amongst which are scattered extensive ruins of a much more substantial colony than now exists. [imp. to note.] The Narmadā river, being one of the most sacred rivers of India, is crowded with *jogis* and pilgrims, many of whom do the *pradakṣiṇā* of the river--that is, they start from Broach and travel along its north bank to its source among the hills at Amaraṇṭaka and return again to Broach by the southern bank. This is said to take three years to accomplish, but this includes all the halts at the numberless sacred spots along its banks.



Upon the tops of the hills forming the island of Māndhātā are signs of a once flourishing settlement, and temples, basements, long lines of walking, fortifications, and gateways, in most part in ruin, show that the place was once of no small importance.⁵⁵ But this is now, save for a little attention to one or two of the shrines, practically deserted, and stands high above, and apart from the modern town. Among the ruins are some fine old temples and other buildings. The town with its scores of comparatively modern temples is not so interesting. The great columns in the temple of Oṃkāra are certainly old, and belong to a former structure, the present building being of no great age.

A curious arrangement in it is that the *liṅga cell* is not placed, as usual, in the line with the front door of the temple, but is placed to one side, so that the *liṅga* cannot be seen except from the remote inner end of the hall.

The temple of Siddhanātha, upon the top [exact location?] of the hill, now in ruins, is the principal and most interesting relic of antiquity at Māndhātā [imp. to note].

⁵⁵ Very important to note.



It stands upon the plateau towards the eastern edge, upon a raised platform whose plinth is supported all around by elephants in various positions in relief, two of which have found their way to the Museum at Nāgpur, where they guard the entrance to that building⁵⁶.

The central shrine still stands with its four entrances, one on each of its four sides, and the great columns of the four porches. The *śikhara* or spire of the shrine and the roofs of the porches have fallen. The temple has been well decorated.

⁵⁶ All others are mutilated.

Among other ruins on the hill is a large bracketted gateway similar to, though not so elaborate as to those at Dabhoi in Gujarat. It is in a very ruinous condition. It is one of the gateways of the old fort.

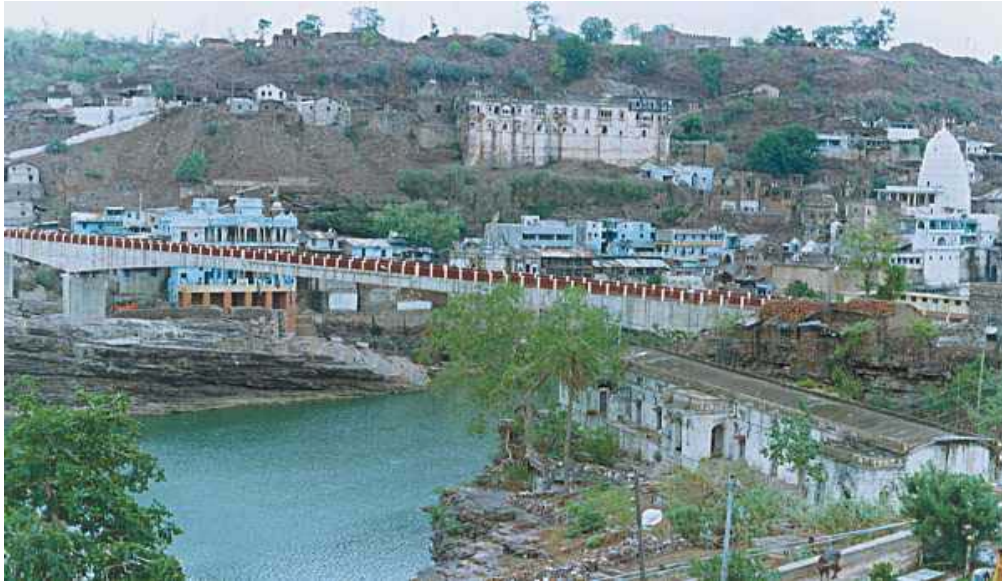


Of another old temple the shrine and tower remain with a very large *linga* within. The plan is star shaped, formed by the corners of superimposed squares.

There are also the ruins of other temples, together with a Vaiṣṇava shrine still in use at the western end of the plateau. Ruined walls and the basements of houses, together with loose sculptures, show that *an extensive settlement once existed here* [emphasis added.]

Balfour's Encyclopedia Asiatica⁵⁷

MĀNDHĀTĀ, an island in the Narbadā belonging to the Nimar district, containing numerous temples, ancient and modern, including the great shrine of Omkar, a form of Śiva. It is cleft in two by a deep ravine running nearly north and south, the eastern end containing about one-third of the whole area. The southern bank of the Narbadā opposite Māndhātā (called Godarpura) is as precipitous as Māndhātā, and between them the river forms an exceedingly deep and silent pool [note], full of crocodiles and large fish, many of which are so tame as to take grain off the lower steps of the sacred ghāts.



Courtesy: Friends of Indore, Pal and Joshi

The worship of Śiva was established here at an early age. On Māndhātā the shrine of Omkāṛ, and on the southern bank that of Amareshwar (lord of the immortals) are two [!] of the twelve great *liṅgams* which existed in India when Mahmud of Gazni demolished the temple of Somnāth in A.D. 1024 [imp. to note]. The name Omkar is from the syllable Om, which, says Professor Wilson [where?], is a combination of letters invested by Hindu mysticism with peculiar sanctity, employed in the beginning of all prayers. It comprehends all the gods, the Vedas, the three spheres of the world, etc.

The Brahmans who now officiate at the shrine wish to exclude Omkar from the twelve liṅgams, and it is usually called Ādi or first, as something above and before them all. The Narmadā Khanda supports them in this assertion, but as it

⁵⁷ Evidently Balfour borrows from Forsyth, the Gazetteer.

contains a prophecy of the time when India shall be ruled by Mleccha (non-Hindu) and other modern allusions, its antiquity is certainly a good deal open to doubt. The evidence of the Kāśī Khaṇḍa and other Śaivite writings is against them, and the pilgrims who have vowed to visit the *Bārāḥ* jyoti liṅgam pay their adoration both to Oṃkar and Amareshwar.

The raja of Māndhātā, who is hereditary custodian of all the modern temples, is a Bhilālā, claiming descent from a Chauhan Rajput named Bharat Singh, who is stated in the family genealogy to have taken Māndhātā [by force] from a Bhil chief in the year A.D. 1165. Atk [?] The last three letters not clear! Looks like Atk. This may be an abbreviation for the source.

* * * * *

It is now clear that the village on the top of the island/hill, or the hilly-island is Māndhātā. That is part of the Vindhya Mountain. The village called Godarpura is situated on the south bank of the Narmada River and is part of the Satpura Mountain.



View of Godarpura and Satpura Mountain from Mandhata hillside

Balfour spells the name of Māndhātā correctly. However, Sir John Malcolm has a corrupt form, showing the distortion brought to the Indian names by an alien government. For example, Mathurā had become Muttra, reminding something which belongs actually to the bathroom only. Baladeva, for example, was turned into Buldeo.

Omkareshwar Mandhata⁵⁸

By Amar Nath Khanna⁵⁹

[Pathetically Poor Performance]



Courtesy: Friends of Indore, Pal and Joshi

Situated in District Nimar in Madhya Pradesh, at a short distance from Omkareshwar Road railway station and 50 [?]⁶⁰ kilometres from Khandwa, Mandhata is a small township on the Narmadā. This river, one of the sacred rivers of India, is said to have sprung from the body of Shiva and is considered by the local devotees to be even holier than the Ganga, the Ganga herself being supposed to take a dip in its water once a year to maintain her purity.⁶¹

The place is popularly known as Omkāra Māndhātā after the shape of the island, which resembles the mystic letter Om. [Emphasis added]. The island is about two kilometres long [?] is surrounded by Narmada or Rewa and [a] streamlet⁶² Kaveri, joining Narmada.

The island itself is known as Śivapurī, while the section on the southern bank is divided into Brahma and Vishnu *puris* by the little stream called Kapilā,

⁵⁸ Obtained through the kind courtesy of Dr. C. P. Ramasesh, Mysore. *Bhavan's journal*, Feb. 9, 1963.

⁵⁹ Extremely poor writing. A disgrace to scholarship.

⁶⁰ It is 77 kms dumb!

⁶¹ We need validation—what is the authority. Hearsay won't do any good in a systematic writing. But it is not a systematic writing at all. It is meant for the common folk. Simple Simons.

⁶² Nonsense and rubbish.

which flows into the Narmada through *gomukha* (cow's mouth). It appears that the northern bank of the Narmada was originally Vishnu's town as the principal remains of Vishnu temples are found here [noteworthy], while those on the southern bank of the river are of much less consequence.⁶³

The situation of the island has also contributed to its sacredness as in the case of many other places of Hindu pilgrimage. The principal temple at Mandhata is situated partly on the bank of the Narmada and partly on the Śivapurī island [?], which is very rich in natural beauty. The charm of the landscape lies in the picturesque gorge cut into the hornstone slate rocks of greenish hue belonging to the earliest rock systems. The strongly stratified character of the rocks presents a step like appearance [?] the entire landscape recalling the legendary flight of steps leading to heaven (*svarga-sopāna*).

According to the tradition, the liṅga representing Shiva was installed here by King Māndhātā Chakravartī, who gave his name to the town, in the beginning of this *Kalpa* (aeon). Known as Parameśvara, the liṅga enshrined at this place is one of the twelve most sacred liṅgas (Jyotirlingas) described in the *Śivamahāpurāṇa*. Jyotirlingas are generally supposed to be self-born [self-emerging ?] living liṅgas, often compared in ancient literature with Jyotikuṇḍa, the eternal column of light symbolizing the all-pervading God (Shiva).

The Jyotirlinga, on account of which Māndhātā is considered to be a very significant pilgrimage centre, is also designated as Amareśvara. [Wrong, wrong! Simply disgusting!]. The famous *Mahimnastava* (Ode to praise of Shiva's greatness) was found inscribed in the characters of the 11th – 12th century A.D. on a stone slate [?] in the temple of Omkar⁶⁴, but the extant shrine could not be dated earlier than the 17th century. Perhaps, the inscription belonged to some older Shiva temple of the mediaeval period.⁶⁵ A curious feature of the liṅga is that it is not placed as usual right in front of the principal entrance of the temple, but to a side. The cell round the liṅga is filled with water and it is said that the water-level in it remains consistently the same in spite of any quantity of water being poured therein.⁶⁶

There are impressive remains of a Shiva temple on the top of the island⁶⁷. When it was intact, this temple must have been exceedingly graceful and

⁶³ Does not make any sense to us at all.

⁶⁴ We need a reference to this statement!

⁶⁵ Does not make any sense to us at all. Maybe the author himself does not know what he is talking about. It seems to be a **matta pralāpa**.

⁶⁶ Is this verifiable?

⁶⁷ Exact location? Every statement is vague.

imposing⁶⁸. Nothing definite is known about the date of the builder of this temple. On stylistic grounds, however, it may be assigned to *circa* 12th century A.D. It has also some late inscriptions, one of which bears a date, Samvat 1795, i.e. A.D. 1738⁶⁹. This temple is noteworthy on account of its plan and particularly the position of the *garbhagriha*, which is placed in the centre instead of at one end, as is usually the case.

At the western end of the island is the shrine of Rinamukteshvara [Rṇ]. There are also two gateways belonging to the forts which formerly enclosed the sections⁷⁰ of the hill. In the niches flanking the gateways are the images of Mahishāsūramardīnī [?] and Gaṇeśa [?]⁷¹.

There is also [!] an annual fair, beautifully picturesque, held at Mandhata which starts on the Shudī Ekadashī of Kārtika (October-November) and lasts for ten days. Thousands of pilgrims attend the Kārtika fair at Mandhata and offer worship at the shrine of Omkarājī, which contains one of the twelve Jyotirlingas in the country. In the month of Phālguna also, a fair takes place on the eve of Shivarātri, which lasts for five days.

Towards the north-east of Shivapurī (the island/hill) can be seen the remains of a Vishnu temple known as Chaubīs Avatar Temple. It contains sculptures showing eighteen [?] of the twenty-four forms of Vishnu, most of the names being inscribed below the images. Though nothing definite is known about the date and builder of the temple, on sculptural, structural, and paleographical grounds, it may be assigned to *circa* 13th century A.D. The main image is that of the Varāha-Avatāra of Vishnu. Majority of the sculptures is highly polished though inferior in artistic quality. To the north-east...Chaubīs Avatar [?] Temple is a shrine called Siddhavarakūṭa. (NB. Information on the temples has been moved to the Temples section.)

Note: This is not a scholarly writing at all. Far, far away from it. There are no references, no citation. It is not authentic. It is not trustworthy.⁷² Only two pages, published in a popular magazine supported by ads and ads. Very pathetic situation indeed. Written in **tandrā or in madironmāda**.

⁶⁸ Some say it was never completed.

⁶⁹ It is a thoughtless statement.

⁷⁰ How many? Do you know it, dear writer? Or, you just copied it? Thanks.

⁷¹ Where did you see this ?

⁷² Much of it is nonsense and rubbish any way. It is good that the writer did not write more and thus spared us from more agony.

In other words, this paper has presented certain information which is beyond the grasp of our limited power of understanding. Only a scholar possessing the power of the writer can understand.⁷³



⁷³ We believe it is a disgrace to scholarship. It is a disservice to the World of Learning. It is very sad. It is very bad.

Sir John Malcolm

MUNDATTA⁷⁴

Sir John Malcolm gives a short description of Mundatta[!] on p. 504 of vol. 2 of his *Memoir of Central India*... in the section called Geographical Index:

MUNDATTA. (*Phallus-gifted—or gilded ?*)—A small town containing one hundred houses [imp. to note], situated on the South side of an island in the Nerbudda, and famed for the sanctity of its Pagoda. Lat. 22.14 N.; Long. 76.17 E. [Note the exact location.] The Nerbudda is here confined between rocks, and not more than one hundred yards broad, but very deep. About three-quarters of a mile to the Eastward is a ghaut which becomes fordable in January or February; but never easily, owing to the rapidity of the stream and the large round stones in its bed. [This is a very important description.]



The island of Mundatta [same as Māndhātā] is a hill of moderate height, and was formerly fortified, but there are now only the remaining a few gateways and old pagodas all covered with jungle. The town stands on the slope of the hill. The neighbouring country consists of a succession of low hills, deep ravines, and water-courses, the whole covered with high thick forests, which for seven or eight miles

⁷⁴ The honorable name is terribly distorted. This corrupt form of the name has been used by a writer who wrote on the coins dedicated to OM. Many writings seen by us on Mandhata are found to be of a very low level indeed. The best one is that of Captain James Forsyth. Most of others have copied him without understanding.

from the river are only passable on foot. The Pagoda here is dedicated to Ongkar, the phallic emblem of Mahadeva; and about three-fourths of a mile East, is the sacrifice rock, called Bheercallah, whence the devotees project themselves during the feast of Cartic Jattrā. [Kārtika yātrā]. This is one of the twelve celebrated places, where, according to the followers of Siva, the god is most peculiarly present. Here he is known under the form of the mystic syllable **Om**.

We note: This corrupt form of the holy name has been used by a writer in VKP on the subject of coins dedicated to OM. Many writings presented in this collection of ours on Mandhata are found to be of a very low level indeed. The best one of the present age is that of Forsyth. Most writers have copied from this great writing without fully understanding the reality of the original. There is another good writing and it is that of Vishnurama Sanavadya. It is a first hand account. The writer visited the place himself and stayed there for three nights, seeing is believing. But it is extremely short.



Omkāreśvara Māndhātā

Rām Nāth Pasrichā

Roop Lekhā (Vol. 42, nos. 1-2).

Omkāreśvara Māndhātā, about 50 miles from Indore by bus or train, is a small rock island which stands between two streams of Narmadā. It is the site of one of the twelve jyotirlingas described in the *Śivamahā-purāṇam*. It is an important pilgrim place in Madhya Pradesh, where hundreds of devotees come daily for a holy dip in the Narmadā and “Darshan” of the “Liṅga.” What is more important about this place is that the island and its surroundings have numerous ancient temples, and a large number of extremely fine sculpture lie scattered on the hillock, uncared for [imp. to note].



Courtesy: Friends of Indore, Pal and Joshi

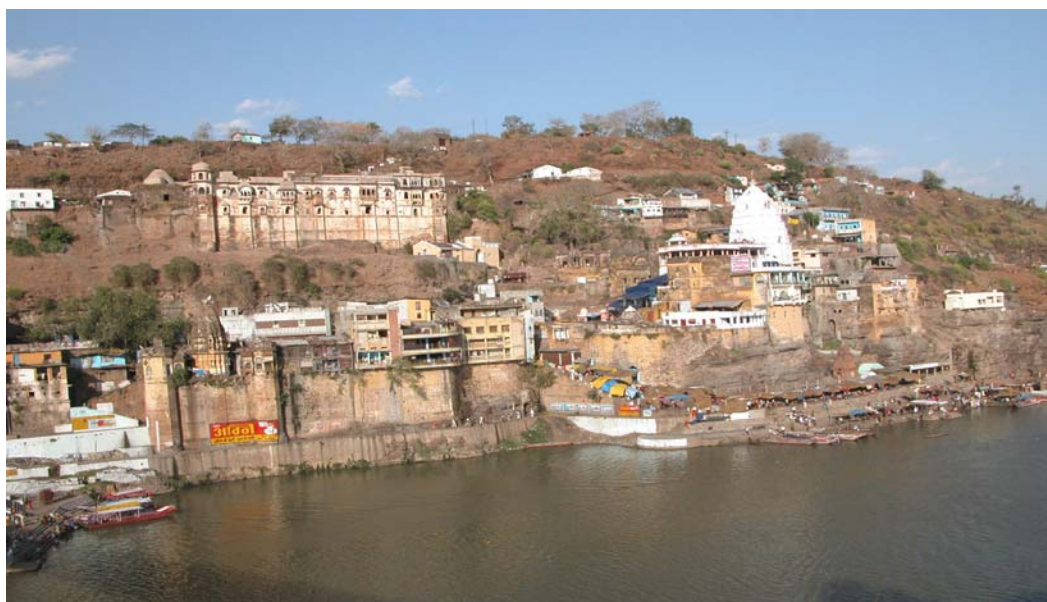
In *Skandapurāṇam*, there is a story which describes the coming into being of this island. Once, it is said, there lived on the mountain a demon called Andhakāśura. Lord Shiva hit him with his trident, which caused a thunderous roar. Out of this roar, emerged the island of Omkareshwar.⁷⁵

A second story describes how this island came to be known as Mān- dhātā. Once, it says, there was a king in Ikṣvāku dynasty whose name was Yuvanākṣa [or

⁷⁵ Skanda purana is an ocean. How does it help? The question is: If the mountain was already there, on which lived a demon, how could it come up again? Not a scholarly statement at all.

Yuvanāśva?]. He had no child. He retired to an “āshrama” of “rishis” to perform penance to please the gods and be blessed with a son. The “rishies” filled a pitcher of water and sanctified it with prayers for the queen to drink, so that she might conceive. But by an accident [!], it was the king who drank it and after a hundred years, gave birth to a son. Gods assembled to see this wonderful child and asked Indra as to who would suckle [nurse?] the baby. “Eṣa mām dhātā” He will drink me [!] said Indra, and put the middle finger [?] of his right hand in the child’s mouth. He named the child Māndhātā. For sixteen years Indra nursed Māndhātā thus, after which he crowned him as king. He was so pleased with the manly qualities and the wisdom of the young king that he gave him half of his kingdom.⁷⁶

Māndhātā is said to have ruled for a hundred million [!] years and once performed a hundred “yajña” in praise of Lord Shiva. The Lord appeared before him and asked him to pronounce a wish. Māndhātā requested the Lord to stay on the island for ever, and ever since the “Jyotirlinga” has been on the island which the Lord named Māndhātā after the king.⁷⁷



The exact dates and who built the numerous temples and [?]⁷⁸ on and around the island are not known, but the Puranic stories do indicate the antiquity of this pilgrim place. The only sources which throw meagre light on these temples are

⁷⁶ It seems the author wanted to write something. So he wrote what pleased him whether it is right or wrong.

⁷⁷ I am puzzled where did he get all this information from? He has given no source. I have never come across such a description.

⁷⁸ Apparently the paper was self-proof read! Irresponsible work. Disgusting.

three huge copper plates⁷⁹ which were discovered on them⁸⁰. One of these plates dates back to 1055-56 A.D. and records the grant of nearby villages to the “Brāhmaṇas” of “Amareshvara Temple” on the south bank of the Narmadā by Jayasimhadeva (1055c.-1070 A.D. who was the successor of King Bhoja of Malwa. The other two, dating 1225 and 1260 A.D. found in the Siddheshvara temple [!] mention the name of Devapāla (1218-39 A.D.) and Jayavarman (1255-74 A.D.). It is likely that the Parmārs, who ruled the whole of Malwa to which this place belonged between 9th and 13th centuries A.D. with their capital at Dhar, and who were devotees of Shiva, must have been associated with these temples in one way or the other.⁸¹

The finest temple of the whole complex is the Siddheshvara Temple. It is located on the top of the hill on the island. The temple has a square sanctum with a doorway in each of its four sides. The plinth which is four to five feet high has elephants in elegant poses carved in relief. The entrance on each side of the inner shrine has a mandapa on 18 pillars. These pillars are 14 feet high and are elaborately carved.



Most of these have figures half way up and end in the four projections in the shape of “Apsarās”, on which rest stone slabs intended to form the roof. Most of the elephant carvings are now mutilated and the original roof of the inner complex is there no more. Lord Curzon visited this temple in 1902 and according to the Imperial Gazetteer [ref?]⁸², it then had an unsightly dome, possibly built in a much

⁷⁹ It was only one inscription covering three plates! The references to the inscriptions made here are wrong, dead wrong! Poor performance. It is not clear if the matter was clear to the writer. He must have been thinking something else.

⁸⁰ A very vague and misleading statement.

⁸¹ A childish writing. Does not deserve to be published in a standard journal. It is misleading. It proves the validity of the nyāya—**Svayam naṣṭaḥ parān nāśayati**, or **Svayam api likhitam svayam na vācayati**.

⁸² Searching needle in a haystack!

later period. He formed the opinion that the temple might have been left unfinished by the original builder. He had the dome removed and replaced by a new roof, invisible from outside, to give the temple what he conceived to be its original look.⁸³



The main chamber of the shrine has a “Linga,” and a number of beautiful sculptures picked up from the surroundings are stored there. [imp. to note.] The temple was protected by a wall, pierced by two gateways, the remains of which are still there. The gateways are important from the architectural points of view. The gateway in the west is in a deteriorated condition, with the roof gone. Only the side pillars and some slabs of stone across them remain. These pillars are exquisitely carved. The eastern gateway is flanked by huge images of “Mahā-kāla” and “Bhairava.”⁸⁴

Another important temple on the island is the “Gori [Gaurī] Somanātha” temple. It has a gigantic “Linga” of smooth black stone and a “Nandi” of the same stone is outside.⁸⁵ It is a three-storeyed building, elaborately carved with beautiful sculptures.

The temple is in good shape and the hillock around is strewn with beautiful sculptures of various sizes. [Imp. to note]

The “Omkareshwara” temple on the ghats of the island, which is the goal of most of the pilgrims, is a much later sculpture, and possibly belongs to the 17th century. According to the 11th and 12th century stone inscriptions found in that

⁸³ How much did Lord Curzon know of ancient India’s art and architecture? And how much did our author know of the subject he was writing upon. Very pathetic situation indeed.

⁸⁴ Is this verifiable?

⁸⁵ Up or down?

temple⁸⁶ there must have been an earlier structure, over which the present one is superimposed. In the nooks and corners around the temple and on stairways and parapets lie beautiful sculptures throbbing with life, unattended, and none, alas, will ever know who created them. [Noteworthy statement. Will they stay there for ever?

WE NEED A MUSEUM OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY ON MOUNT MANDHATA!!]

The southern bank of the Narmadā is partitioned by a small stream called Kapilā. The two parts are called Brahmapurī and Vishṇupurī and have two important temples called “Amareshvara” and “Bṛdheshwar.”



In “Amareshvara” temple were found four inscriptions dated 1063 A.D.⁸⁷ [copy-cat writing, not authentic] The structures of these temples, of “Siddheshvara” temple and its gates⁸⁸, and the “Gaurī Somanātha” temples, have been raised by putting blocks of stones one above the other without the use of the mortar. The temples have no arches and even the spires are built of tiers of stone slabs shelving inwards.

On the other bank, [i.e. northern bank of Kāverī] there is a complex of Jain temples. Although some of the images in the temples are said to be very old, the temples themselves belong to a much later period. Nearby flows a small stream along which lies a gigantic stone sculpture of “Mahākālī.” Folk tradition has

⁸⁶ Difficult to believe.

⁸⁷ This date is doubtful.

⁸⁸ Blind writing!

identified it with Rāvaṇa.⁸⁹ [The writer had no knowledge of what he was writing about.]

The whole complex of temples on the island and on the southern and northern banks of Narmadā remain unstudied by scholars. They are lying there neglected and the possibility of valuable sculptures having been removed cannot be ruled out. [Emphasis added].

Note: Pictures of this article appear in a separate section in the original.

My observations: The writer knows to some extent what is art, architecture and sculpture, i.e. appreciates them, but does not authenticate his statements here by any citations or references to sources. Maybe, he does not have them at all. He writes in a popular vein. It is written for the common people, the man in the street, who is not going to understand the writing any way. On the whole, this is a very poor writing.



⁸⁹ This is very unfortunate.

H. D. Sankalia

H. D. Sankalia in his *Report on Excavations at Maheshwar*...says that Mucukunda built a **parikhā** or moat around the city of Māhiṣmatī, now called Maheshvara.

It is to be remembered in this connection that Mucukunda was one of the two sons of the Great King Māndhātā, highly devoted to Bhagavān Viṣṇu. Another son was Ambarīsha, equally devoted to Lord Viṣṇu, whose story regarding Shrīmatī, the Princess is narrated in *Līṅgapurāṇa*--Nārada-Parvata-muni-yugala-vyāmoha.

But we have found that the Muchukunda of Sankalia is different by parentage. This matter needs a great deal of search and research. Maybe some day someone would do this “Utkhanana.”

West Nimar District Gazetteer has some substantial information on Maṇḍana Mishra and Māhiṣmatī as well as Maṇḍaleshvara.

H. D. Sankalia says on p. 11:-

Omkāra Māndhātā

Omkāra Māndhātā or simply Māndhātā ((22° 14' N 76° 17' E)) is an island in the Narmadā. It is about 38 miles above Maheshwara, but considerably distant by road. The approach from the railway is through the jungle on the southern side. Just where the site is, the river has cut through beautiful sandstone formation. The river channel is deep and narrow, with high, rocky banks. The main temple (Omkāreshwar) is situated on the northern side. Higher up on the same side [?] are magnificent temples (in ruins), some with *Toraṇas* of the Para-māra period. There are number of old temples on the southern side also. When Malcolm visited it he noticed remains of fortification on the island. (Malcolm, John, *Memoir of Central India* (London 1832), vol. II, p. 504 (see under Mundatta). Also *I. A.* 1896, pp. 53-56.

Other late, medieval or early notices of the place seem to be few (unless it be identified with Māhiṣmatī). Puranic references are also scarce. There is one in the *Śivamahāpurāṇa* (Śivamahāpurāṇa IV (Kālī [?] rudrasamhitākhaṇḍa), A 18) and one in *Saurapurāṇa* (Saurapurāṇa (Anandāshrama, Poona, Śaka 1811. VI, śloka

15-18). Both these, however, describe the sacredness of Omkāreśvara, but do not couple it with Māndhātā, of which there is no mention at all. However, after Fleet and Pargiter some writers identify it with Māhiṣmati.

* * *

We believe: The sources and resources available to Sankalia were limited indeed as far as Māndhātā is concerned. His main attraction was Maheshvara. He used all his power of argumentation to deny the identification of Mandhata with ancient Mahishmati. Anyone who goes through what is presented in this Sourcebook shall be convinced of this reality. This fact gives us some real satisfaction that we have rendered some substantial service to the world of learning. We can only hope and pray that some impartial true scholar will get inspired by our work and would continue it.



Pilgrim spots in the heartland of India: Madhya Pradesh.

An Anonymous writing.⁹⁰

On p. 54 of *Adi Sankara* Book we read under the heading—OMKARJI

Omkarji is five [!] miles⁹¹ from the Omkareshwar Road railway station, which is on the Indore-Khandwa railway line from Mandu. Omkarji can be reached through Mhow. [Why only one?]

Māndhātā and the Śiva Temple

The holy city [!]⁹² of Omkārijī, otherwise called Māndhātā, boasts of two of India's holiest temples dedicated to Śiva. Situated on an island, a mile and a half long, in the middle of sacred Narmada river, Omkarji is split into two by a deep ravine from north to south. Steep hills dot the southern and eastern parts of the island. The swift and deep river is a haunt of crocodiles. The rocks have a tint of green, which blends beautifully with the dark green foliage and the brown and gray temples which rise in rows. The Birkhala rocks to the east end of the island are of great sanctity. According to tradition, it was considered meritorious to die at this spot and devotees used to cast themselves into the river, until the practice was ended in 1824. [These two are not identical.]

The founder of this holy Shrine was one Rājā Māndhātri [!], who claimed descent from the Sun. Māndhātri performed a great sacrifice to Śiva [note--not *tapas*] on the island which was named after the king.

The great temple of Omkarji on the Birkhala rocks is a picturesque building with courtyard and colonnades supported by massive pillars. The original shrine of Amalleshwar or Mamalleshwar [?], which contains the specially holy lingam is on the southern part of the island.⁹³ The original site was swallowed by the growing jungle. Peshwa Baji Rao II of Poona tried to find and restore the shrine, but could not do so and built a new temple. The original site was later found and a temple built over it, but Peshwa's shrine retains the name of Mamleshwar [?]. There is a

⁹⁰ Betrays immaturity.

⁹¹ In Hindi there is a saying: Kahatā bhī dīvānā sunatā bhī dīvānā.

⁹² Any word goes for any idea. A village becomes city!

⁹³ Nonsense and rubbish.

colossal Nandi (bull) carved in green stone in front of the Gauri Somanatha Temple on the precipice on the western part of the island.⁹⁴

Other Spots in Ruins

On the north bank of the Narmada⁹⁵, a short ⁹⁶distance from Omkarji, are ruins of temples dedicated to Lord Vishnu, and also some Jain shrines. There is a temple dedicated to Varāha (boar) incarnation of Vishṇu, with a fine representation of the boar, near the point where the river branches into two⁹⁷. Carved in green stone are twenty four figures of Vishṇu. In a ravine, further down the bank, is a huge idol (18 1/2 long⁹⁸) of the Goddess Cāmuṇḍa [same as described as Kālī---Rāvaṇanālā in the Gazetteer]. The ten-armed deity is shown sporting with lion cubs and human skulls. On her chest is a scorpion and her right a rat. She rests one foot on a prostrate figure.⁹⁹

A big fare is held on the occasion of the Mahā Shivarātri festival in February/March and another on the occasion of Kārtika Pūrṇimā (full moon) festival in November. (Anonymous, p. 57)¹⁰⁰



⁹⁴ The writer alone may understand what he wrote. To us all this is mumbo jumbo. He was half asleep when he wrote. Or, was under the spell of heavy drinking.

⁹⁵ Quite important to note. It is to be remembered that another cluster of holy temples and palaces in what is now called Maheshvara is also located about 38 miles down west on the northern bank of the river Narmada.

⁹⁶ How short? Every statement is vague, written for the simpletons—simple folks—bhole bhāle loga..

⁹⁷ First meeting point of Narmada and Kaveri, east of the island.

⁹⁸ Note the word “long.” Is it standing or lying down? The writer lacks knowledge. The writing betrays his ignorance. He is not a proper **adhikārin** at all to write on this subject.

⁹⁹ Kapolakalpita galpa or simply a gappa.

¹⁰⁰ In ancient times there were wandering bards. Now we have wandering writers, jumping from one idea to another. No relationship. There are M.A.’s. Here we have Master of Writing.

M. T. Mahajan writes in Adi Sankara book under the title—

Introducing Omkāreshwar—Māndhātā.

He says¹⁰¹:

Omkāreshwar is one of the foremost [!] of the 12 Jyotirlingas of the Hindu mythology [?] situated on the bank of the holy river Narmadā. It is 13 kilometers from Omkāreshwar Road Rly Station and 77 K.M. each from Indore and Khandwa at the opposite ends. In ancient times [?] when the village was situated on the top of the island hill in the river as a fortified town its population was considerable.¹⁰² Presently the population is 4000 [What was earlier? When?]. Its sudden rise is due partly to increased tourist traffic and largely to the construction of a cantilever bridge across the Narmadā in the midst of the townlet in 1979 at a cost of 29 lakhs [of rupees]. The exact location of the island in terms of the lat. and long. are [is?] 22°14' N and 76° 17' E.



Courtesy: Friends of Indore, Pal and Joshi

Puranic History and Legend of the Land:

Rājā Māndhātā of the Ikshvāku family and ancestor of Shri Ramachandra performed great penance (tapas) here [evidence lacking]. God Shiva was pleased and as desired by the King established himself as Omkara at the place. The throne of Raja Māndhātā is still there near the Omkareshwar Temple and is worshipped

¹⁰¹ This writing by Mahajan has been reproduced in Darshanika. Of course, his name is given as the author.

¹⁰² All fairy tales. No authentication.

[imp. to note]. Cf. **Sadaiva māndhātṛpure vasantam and Māndhātṛ-dhātṛīdharah.**

[We have not yet seen any documentary evidence [even from a Purāṇa] to this hearsay. Vettam Mani in his *Puranic Encyclopedia* gives a great deal of information about this famous king Māndhātā, supported by Puranic references, but he does not relate this island in any way with Cakravarti Samrāt Māndhātā of the solar race.]

Omkareśvar is a picturesque island with remarkable scenic beauty. It is about 500 miles from the source of Narmadā. A small 22 mile long river Kāveri joins the Narmada at Omkareshwar [!], but as she was not received properly by the bigger and elder sister Narmada [only a gappa], in the wrath she crosses the Narmada unmixed with its waters carrying not only the flow, but also its name to the other side [All hearsay. No authentication. Every statement is vague.]

[It is noteworthy here that the River Kāveri flows in from the South and tries to meet Narmada. She crosses the main river and flows for complete length of the island on the right side of the Island/Hill and gets merged into Narmada at a distance away from the point of her descent [at the western end of the island]. It is an unparalleled phenomenon if true. It has been brought out well following the copying method by some other writers. This is called Bheḍiyā dhasāna in Hindi.]
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Then when cajoled and persuaded she rejoins the Narmada about 2 miles below. The hilly island so formed in between is roughly 1-½ miles long and about ¾ mile wide. It is called Vaidūrya Maṇi Parvata [Where? By whom?]. The Narmada is a dividing line between the Vindhya Mountain in the north and the Satpura to the South. The channel north of the island (Kāverī) is shallower and wider, while the Narmada to the south is narrow and deep, forming a silent pool full of fish and in former times with alligators too. The depth of the river below the bridge is taken by the engineers to be about 250 deep.

History of the Place:

During the medieval period Mandhata Omkareshwar was ruled by Rajput Chauhāns under the suzerainty first of the Paramāras, and then of the Sultans of Malwa, and lastly of the Scindias, who handed over the Island to the British in 1824. [The date is important in terms of the abandonment of the self-immolation as

¹⁰³ All this is only the tales of grandmother told to put the child to sleep.

said to have been discontinued after this specific date. An example of senseless talk presented by some earlier English writers who didn't care for the truth.]

We have just learnt [from an official report] that the Rajas of Mandhata served as the governors of nearby forts under the Muslim rulers of the region.

Omkareshwar Temple:

The Omkareshwar temple containing the Jyotirlinga is the main center of attraction and object of veneration. As to who constructed the temple and when, it is all shrouded in mystery [What effort, if any, has been made to find the truth?]. The inner sanctum sanctorum which appears as an independent temple in itself is very old [how old?] while the extension of the temple with its imposing Sabhā Maṇḍapa containing huge stone columns with carved human avataric figures appears to belong to the Brahmanical times or Gupta period of 4th or 5th century A.D. [No evidence]. As the sanctum is close to the precipitious bank of the Narmada River, the extension made is sideways. [Does not make any sense to us at all!] That is why neither the main door is in front of the deity, nor the Shikhar above it. The temple is five storeyed. The Raos of Mandhata used to be the hereditary custodians of the temple. It was declared a Public Trust in 1959.



Govindeshwar Guphā and Temple:

It is a well-known historical fact¹⁰⁴ that Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya took his Diksha and education of the Shastras from his Guru Shri Govinda Bhagavadpada at Omkareshwar. The place on the bank of Narmada where he took his Dīkshā is consecrated by the erection of a temple aptly called the Govindeshwar Temple. The guphā or cave where Govinda Bhagavatpada performed his penances is also touching [?] the Narmada bank.

It has excellent carvings of different designs on its stone roof¹⁰⁵ and of human figures in various moods on its pillars inside [imp. to note]. Both the Guphā and the temple are very old and are partially or fully submerged in high floods of the Narmada and had been much damaged. So Shri Jayendra Sarasvati Svamigal, the [present] Shankaracharya of Shri Kanchi Kamakoti Pitha has, in order to perpetuate the glory of the two great Acharyas, acquired both the Guphā and the temple and made extensive repairs. A big Sabha Mandapa is also being constructed in front of the Govindeshwar Temple. Ten acres of land of the Mandhata (Island) hill has already been acquired and about two acres is being acquired in the southern part of the town for the whole Shankaracharya complex....at a cost of about Rs. five crores...[A big drum is being beaten, generating a loud noise, but which is hollow inside. Correspondence with them has been a one-way street. It was terribly disappointing and disgusting. They are VIP's. They converse only with the VIP's. We are merely **kshudra jantus**. This has been a very sad experience. Some of their associates are only money-mongers. They don't know what is **tyāga** and **tapasyā**, **service and benevolence**.]



¹⁰⁴ Is it traditional or historical? Is there any documentary evidence? Could it be verified? To this class of writers the "history" stands for any story.

¹⁰⁵ Is it roof or ceiling?

Ādi Śaṅkara at Omkāreśvara

Shri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetha Seva Trust Omkareshwar¹⁰⁶

M. G. K. Menon

Omkareshwar, a tiny [an understatement] island created by the River Kaveri, a tributary of Narmada, which joins the main river from the left bank, crosses her and rejoins from the right—a rare geographical phenomenon in the world—is the most important among the twelve jyotirlingas, where Lord Shiva is worshipped in the Bhāratavarsha. It is most important, because the very “Prajñava” (OM) is the physical feature [?] of this blessed land of King Mandhata, over the Hill of which the Mountain Vindhya himself had undertaken a long penance to bring Shiva down to earth in the form of Siddhinātha. It was here that Shankaracharya, born to Āryāmbā and Shivaguru of Kaladi in the deep south Kerala, at the tender age of eight found his Guru Shri Govinda Bhagavadpāda and was initiated to Sannyāsa. [All these traditional tales are beyond the power of our understanding.]

According to a legend, Ādi Śaṅkara in search of a guru for himself came all the way from Kerala and found Shri Govinda Bhagavadpāda under mysterious circumstances. The young lad who had walked hundreds of miles, crossing wild forests, mountains, hills, valleys, rivers and rivulets reached Omkareshwar and found Shrimad Govinda Bhagavatpāda in a state of Nirvikalpa Nishtha [samādhi] in a cave under a Banyan tree on the bank of River Narmada at Omkareshwar. It was widely believed that this was the same Banyan tree from which Sage Gauḍapāda, the disciple of Shuka, the son of Veda Vyāsa, suffering from a curse was hanging upside down in the form of a Brahma Rākshasa and eating those walking under, unable to give appropriate answers to his questions on Advaita [?]. Govinda Bhagavatpāda, giving correct answers, it is said, escaped sudden death and devouvrement at the hands of Gauḍapāda and took down the intricacies of Vedānta and redeemed Gauḍapāda of the curse. The tree is, however, not there now.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ This Trust is different from the Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga Temple Trust. They now have their own home page. Most of what follows is only a hearsay.

¹⁰⁷ Was it ever there? According to another legendary tale, the tree was on a highway. The Brahmarākṣasa used to ask every passerby.

River Narmada was in floods when Shaṅkara reached Omkareshwar¹⁰⁸. Sage Govindapāda was in deep meditation and the swollen Narmada had flooded the whole area there. Distressed folks gathered around the sage, trying to seek his intercession to mitigate the fury of Narmada, but they were afraid to disturb him. It was at this stage that the eight-year old lad from Kaladi appeared on the spot. When young Shankara saw the plight of the flood-stricken people, he took out his ghaṭa [jar] and held its mouth against the surging flood waves, and lo, and behold, the flow was caught up and contained in the ghaṭa. The joyful ones of the people woke Govindapāda. Shankara made his humble obeisance and prostrated before him. Govindapāda told him: Sages perform tapas for centuries to have the darshan of Lord Parameshvara, which thou hast voluntarily afforded unto me. Even so conforming to the ways of the world, I shall accept you as my disciple and make myself worthy to be blessed. [Comparison may be made with the question –as to “Who are you”—asked by the guru and the answer given by the disciple as “I am neither earth....”**Na bhūmir na toyam.**¹⁰⁹

He then embraced Shankara and took him into his fold. He imparted Brahma Vidyā, all the yogas and other intricate secrets of Vedas, Purāṇas, and Upanishads. Shankara was then initiated into Sannyāsa [?].

Both the Cave in which Adi Shankara found Shrimad Govinda Bhagavad-pāda, his guru and the spot at which Shankara was initiated to Sannyāsa by his master (on the bed of River Narmada identified as Govindeshwar Temple in the Koti Tirtha)¹¹⁰ still exist at Omkareshwar, but ravages of time and neglect for centuries have left them in total ruins.

B that occurred to the nonagenarian Paramācārya of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham some years ago that invoked sustained efforts of some experts who could identify and confirm the cave in which Sankara found his Guru Govindapāda and the spot at which Sankara was given the Deeksha of Sannyāsa. These experts inspected the Cave in January 1979 and found that it conformed to the descriptions of the Book, *The Age of Sankara*. [No bibliographical details. I saw one book with this title. It was a cheap, shallow, modern work-- almost a trash. There must be some authentic older publication. Let us find out.]

¹⁰⁸ Exact spot of reaching?

¹⁰⁹ This is another traditional tale.

¹¹⁰ What is this?

His Holiness Sri Jayendra Sarasvati Svamigal, the reigning Śankaracharya of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, visited Omkareshvar in 1980 and was distressed to find the miserable conditions in which both the hallowed spots were allowed to remain. They were in a state of utter abuse and filthy surroundings. He decided to take them over for renovation and preservation in furtherance of the dream the Paramācārya, His Holiness Chandra Shekharendra Svamigal, his own guru had envisioned.

In March 1987 when His Holiness Shri Jayendra Sarasvati Svamigal visited Bhopal, he met some of the devotees and discussed his plans with them to acquire both the Cave and Govindeshwar Temple at Omkareshavar, renovate them, and preserve them with proper maintenance and also to have a befitting memorial to Adi Shankara Bhagavadpāda and his Guru, Srimad Govinda Bhagavadpāda on the Mandhata Hill, overlooking both the rivers, Narmada and Kaveri.

Accordingly under his direction, Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetha Seva Trust Omkareshvar was founded. [The writer then describes the nature and the constitution, etc. of the Trust.]

The Trust has already acquired the Cave Temple...the State Government has allotted Sri Govindeshwar Temple at Koti Tirtha (the spot at which Adi Shankara was given the Deekshā of Sannyāsa by his Guru) and ten acres of land over the Mandhata Hill at a nominal price.

Both the Cave Temple and Sri Govindeshwar Temple have been renovated and on the last Shankara Jayanti day (April 21, 1988) H. H. Sri Jayendra Sarasvati installed the deities of Srimad Govinda Bhagavadpāda in the Cave Temple and of Adi Shankara Bhagavadpāda in Sri Govindeshwar Temple.

The Trust has now plans to develop the ten acre land over Mandhat Hill into a Shankara Jñāna Kendra, consisting of a Veda Pathashala, Sanskrit Academy, a Research Centre and Library of the life and works of Adi Shankara Bhagavadpāda, an Institute of Vedic Mathematics and a Yoga Centre.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ They don't want to help others. Correspondence with them is a one-way street. Their recycling bin must be as gigantic as their plans. They are big. They talk with only big ones. We are too small to receive any attention from them.

To begin with, it is proposed to have a Sanskrit Pathashala, perhaps this year itself.

The task is heavy, even for Herculeans to accomplish. But then, with the blessings of Blessed Acharyas of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, who have inculcated the spirit and heritage of ancient India, there is nothing impossible, and with this belief firm in our mind, the Trustees have determined to make Omkareshvara **the most sought after place for the faithfuls and students of India's near ancient past.** [Emphasis added.] MAY WE BE BLESSED THUS.

The greatness, grandeur and glory of Shankaracharya

The greatness of Shankara's achievement rests on the peculiar intensity and splendour of thought with which the search for reality is conducted, on the high idealism of spirit grappling with the difficult problems of life, regardless of theological consequences, and on the vision of a consummation which places a divine glory on human life.

Supreme as a philosopher and a dialectician, great as a man of calm judgement and wide toleration, Shankara taught us to love truth, respect reason and realise the purpose of life. Twelve centuries have passed, and yet his influence is visible. He destroyed many an old dogma, not by viciously attacking it, but by quietly suggesting something more reasonable, which was at the same time more spiritual too. He put into general circulation a new body of important knowledge and formative ideas, which, though contained in the Upanishads, were forgotten by the people, and then recreated for us the distant past. He was not a dreaming idealist but a practical visionary, a philosopher, and the same time a man of action, what we may call a social idealist on the grand scale. Even those who do not agree with his general attitude to life will not be reluctant to allow him a place among the immortals.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

Śaṅkarācārya once more revived the Vedānta philosophy. In the Upanishads the arguments are often very obscure. He worked out, rationalized, and placed before men the wonderful coherent system of Advaita.

Swami Vivekananda

श्रीशङ्कराय नमो नमः

आशैलादुदयात् तथास्तगिरितो भास्वद्यशोरश्मिभिः
व्याप्तं विद्वमनन्धकारमभवद्यस्य स्म शिष्यैरिदम् ।
आरात् ज्ञानगभस्तिभिः प्रतिहतश्चन्द्रायते भास्करः
तस्मै शङ्करभानवे तनुमनोवाग्भिर्नमः स्यात् सदा ॥

Unto the great Śaṅkarācārya – glorious as the sun whose fame, as effulgent as the rays of the Sun, was propagated in the world by his disciples, from the east to the west, dispelling the darkness of ignorance, in the vicinity of whose splendour of wisdom even the Sun pales away into a moon--unto that great Śaṅkara may our obeisance through thought, word, and deed for ever be!

* * * * *

श्रुतिस्मृतिपुराणानामालयं करुणालयम् ।
नमामि भगवत्पादं शङ्करं लोकशङ्करम् ॥

वैदिक सनातन धर्म की आचार्य परम्परा

नारायणं पद्मभवं वसिष्ठं शक्तिं च तत्पुत्रपराशरं च
व्यासं शुकं गौडपादं महान्तं गोविन्दयोगीन्द्रमथास्य शिष्यम् ।
श्रीशङ्कराचार्यमथास्य पद्मपादं च हस्तामलकं च शिष्यं
तं तोटकं वार्तिककारमन्यास्मनस्मद्गुरुन्सन्ततमानतोऽस्मि ॥

भगवान् नारायण, ब्रह्मा, वसिष्ठ, शक्ति, शक्ति के पुत्र पराशर, व्यास, शुकदेव, उनके शिष्य गौडपादाचार्य, उनके शिष्य गोविन्दभगवत्पाद, उनके शिष्य शङ्कराचार्य, उनके शिष्य पद्मपादाचार्य, हस्तामलकाचार्य, तोटकाचार्य, वार्तिककार सुरेश्वराचार्य तथा इनके अनन्तर होनेवाले अपने सद्गुरुओं को मैं शरीर, मन, और वाणी से दण्डवत् प्रणाम करता हूँ ।



**Advaita-Paramācārya-Paramparā
at Omkāra Māndhātā**

Shri Gauḍapāda
Govinda Bhagavadpāda, and
Shaṅkara Bhagavadpāda
at the Vindhya Foothills
on the Narmadā River Bank

By N. Krishnamoorthy¹¹²

The foot-hills of the Vindhyas and the banks of the Narmada, from [time?] immemorial, are considered to be one of the very sacred places in Bhārata. Omkareshwar, Mandaleshwar and Maheshwar are the holy places on the banks of the Narmada famous for the Shiva Temples. But still greater is the importance of these holy cities, as they have been very closely associated with the lives of the great Religious Trio, Gauḍapāda, Govinda Bhagavadpāda and Shaṅkara Bhagavadpāda (Ādi Shaṅkara).¹¹³

The Advaita Vidyā was transmitted to Lord Nārāyaṇa by Lord Sadā- shiva and passed on by the latter to Brahmā, and from Brahmā to Vasishṭha, from Vasishṭha to his son Sakhti (?), from Sakhti to his son Parāshara, and from Parāshara to his son Vyāsa and from Vyāsa to his son Śuka.

Thus we see that the Advaita Vidyā was passed on or transferred from father to son as a family inheritance up to Śuka and from Śuka onwards it moved through the Guru-śiṣya-paramparā. Śuka's disciple was Gauḍapāda. Govinda Bhagavadpāda was the disciple of Gauḍapada, and Śaṅkara Bhagavat-pāda (Ādi Shaṅkarāchārya), the disciple of Govinda Bhagavatpāda.

During the short span of 32 years, Ādi Shaṅkara traveled three times through the length and breadth of Bhārata, and was responsible for the revival of Hinduism[?], which had been almost broken up due to the predominance of the idealism of Buddhism, Jainism and seventy two other sects, which had also enticed a large section of the people of Bharata, resulting in the people discontinuing the

¹¹² This article is quite rich in contents, but very poor in presentation. We have tried to improve its contents and style. For example, even the last name of the author was spelled wrong. The original may be OM, but the rendering is not desirable at all. The editorial work is of a very low level indeed. The story is only traditional.

¹¹³ We could safely add Mandana Mishra.

Vedic rites and getting converted to other sects and religions. Under these confused and tormented conditions in Bharata, the great Shaṅkara was born on Śukla Pakṣa Pañcamī day, Anurādhā Nakṣatra, in the year 509 B.C. [?] at Kaladi, to the pious couple Śivaguru and Āryāmbā

Having mastered all the Vedas, etc.¹¹⁴ and with the desire to renounce the world, Shaṅkara at the tender age of eight left his home, with the permission of his mother (his father having passed away when he was only four) in search of a guru, to get himself initiated to the Sannyāsa Āśrama. The young aspiring ascetic, walked on and on, crossing all the mountains, rivers, and forests, with cheer and fervent hope of finding out his preceptor. Finally he reached Omkareshwar on the banks of the River Narmada and met Govinda Bhagavadpāda, who by intuition was waiting all along for the arrival of Shri Shaṅkara, whom he initiated into the Sannyāsa Āśrama and imparted to him all the Advaita Vidyā.

Now, who is this Mahātmā Shrī Govinda Bhagavadpāda? Of course, it is necessary that we should first know the story of his Guru Shrī Gauḍapāda.

Sage Patañjali conducted his classes for about 1000 students assembled at the Chidambaram Temple on Vyākaraṇa Bhāṣya, sitting behind the curtain. Being the Avatāra of Ādiśeṣha, he could impart the lessons, through the one thousand tongues he possessed with the condition that no one should move out of the hall during the classes, otherwise he would be cursed to become a Brahma Rākṣasa. He also laid the condition that if anybody would remove the curtain between him and the students, all the students would be reduced to ashes.

Once a student from the Gauḍadesa, by name Gauḍapāda went out for some-time to answer the nature's call. During that time, another student, out of curiosity to know as to how his master could teach all the one thousand students with one voice, removed the curtain, which resulted in all the students being reduced to ashes, due to the poisonous gas emanating from the mouth of Ādiśeṣha. Gauḍapāda, who returned to the class, found heaps of ashes only instead of the students and the sage Patañjali sitting there with a sad face. On seeing this lone disciple, the sage was pleased to the extent that at least one student had been saved from his first curse. But the same student could not escape the punishment of becoming a Brahma Rākṣasa, as he had gone out of the class without the permission of the sage. However, the great sage Patañjali, blessed Gauḍapāda, the last surviving disciple, with all the knowledge he would have acquired had the classes he had been conducting been continued and also blessed him that he would

¹¹⁴ Only a hyperbole.

get rid of the form of Brahma Rākṣasa and get back his normal form of a human being when he would find a suitable disciple to whom he could impart his knowledge.

Gauḍapāda immediately assumed the form of a Brahma Rākṣasa. After wandering with a restless spirit and without any mental peace, he reached Omkāreshwara, and took refuge under the banyan tree on the highway connecting the South and the North of India.¹¹⁵ The Brahma Rākṣasa would stop any man of letters on the road and ask intricate questions in Sanskrit grammar just like the Nishṭhā Pratyaya for the roots bhuj (भुज्), shak (शक्), etc. which everybody would answer as bhukta (भुक्त) shakta, (शक्त) etc. Immediately it would ask the Nishṭhā pratyaya of the root pach (पच्), for which the consequent thoughtless answer would come out as pakta, (पक्त), while in reality it should be (पक्व). The Brahma Rākṣasa would say: “Your answer is wrong. Pakva (पक्व) is the correct answer, and you are also Pakva for being eaten by me” and immediately would kill him.

After many years of waiting under the Banyan tree, one day a very young, handsome and learned Brahman bachelor, by name Chandra Sharmā, was passing through the highway, and he was also asked the same questions, Chandra Sharma replied without any hesitation that Nishṭhā Pratyaya for the root pach (पच्) is (पक्व). The Brahma Rākṣasa was happy that he could spot out the right disciple and would get his deliverance from the curse no sooner he imparted the knowledge to the disciple. This disciple was Govinda Bhagavad-pāda, the Guru of Ādi Shaṅkarāchārya.

The Brahma Rākṣasa sat on the branch of the Banyan tree and started giving the lessons, which Chandra Sharma went on noting down on the leaves of the Banyan tree with the help of the nails, using the blood drawn out of his thigh as ink. After finishing the lessons, the Brahma Rākṣasa was released from the curse and assumed the original form as Gauḍapāda, blessed his disciple and left for the Himalayan slopes for penance.

Chandra sharma bundled all the leaves in a cloth and as he was exhausted, having spent sleepless nights without food for a number of days, fell asleep under the same banyan tree, keeping the bundle of the leaves behind him. When he was

¹¹⁵ This makes sense. The writer who wrote that the tree was close to the cave was unaware of this believable fable. This kind of writing merely proves the validity of the story of the four blind men trying to find the exact nature of the elephant. They just saw a part only and ran away with their distinctive opinion.

disturbed from sleep, he found that a goat had eaten away a good portion of the leaves in the bundle.

Whatever remained was called the AJA BHAKSHITA BHĀSHYA. Chandra Sharma took possession of the remaining leaves in the bundle and reached Ujjain. He retired to rest in the front verandah of the house of a Vaishya and fell into deep sleep for such a long time that he had to be attended upon by the daughter of the Vaishya which brought consciousness to him. The daughter of the Vaishya said that she would marry only him as she had done that type of service which normally a wife would do to the husband. Since Chandra Sharma refused to marry her, the matter was referred to the King of Ujjain for decision. The king who was very much impressed with the personality and learning of Chandra Sharma, thought of offering his own daughter to him, and he called his minister for consultation. The Minister, who also had a daughter of marriage-able age, thought that the king would have called him for the settlement of the marriage of his own daughter with Chandra Sharma. As such, Chandra Sharma, who had no inclination for marriage at all, had to marry one more girl from the shudra community as it was the custom in those days that if a Brahmana would marry a girl from non-Brāhmaṇa community, he must marry at one and the same time the girls from all the other communities too, in addition to the one from the Brāhmaṇa family.

As such he married, in addition to the three girls from the Brāhmaṇa, Kshatriya and Vaishya communities, a girl from the Shūdra community also. He led a family life till all the wives delivered one child each. The children are known to the posterity as Bhartṛhari, Patil[?], Vararuchi, and Vikramāditya. Thereafter he left for the Himalayas to meet his guru Gauḍapāda. Gauḍapāda offered him sannyāsa, initiated him into the Ātma Vidya, viz. Advaita Philosophy, and was given the Dīkṣā name, Govinda Bhgavatpāda. He stayed with his guru for many years in the Himalayas.

Gauḍapāda and Sage Vedavyāsa, by intuition, came to know that Lord Shiva had taken his birth in a family of Namboodhri's at Kaladi in Kerala, and that he would be going over to Omkāreśvara, on the bank of the Narmada, where he should be initiated to the Sannyāsa Āshrama and given lessons in the Advaita philosophy. Hence Gauḍapāda instructed Govind Bhagavatpāda to retire to Omkāreśvara and await the arrival of Shaṅkara who was none other than Lord Shiva Himself. Govinda Bhagavatpada came back and was plunged in deep meditation for many years.

Shaṅkara also reached there when he was hardly eight years old, and met Govinda Bhagavatpāda. The latter was astonished at the deep learning and wisdom

of this young boy and formally initiated him into the Advaita Vidyā after giving him sannyāsa. The Guru and shiṣya stayed a few years in the same cave which is being renovated by the present Shaṅkarācārya of Kanchi mutt,--H.H. Jayendra Sarasvati Svami, with a view to erect a suitable memorial for the trios – Gauḍapāda, Govinda Bhagavatpāda, and Shaṅkara Bhagavatpāda – at the foot of the Vindhya and on the river bank of the sacred Narmadā.¹¹⁶

Shaṅkara after staying with his Guru for a few years created history by travelling to Kāśī, Badrinath, Kedaranath, Kailash, Paśupatināth, etc. and by writing the immortal Bhāṣyas for the Prasthāntṛaya, *viz.*, the Brahma Sūtras, Upaniṣadas and Bhagavadgītā before his 16th year and also travelling through the length and breadth of the country three times, propagating the philosophy of Advaita and driving away the effects of Buddhism, Jainism and 72 other cults which had started taking roots in the soil of Bharata.

In those days the doctrine of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā was also very much prevalent in the country, Mandana Mishra being one of the foremost exponents of the doctrine. He was staying at Mandaleshwar¹¹⁷ on the banks of the Narmada and a few miles away from Omkareshvara. Shaṅkara having come to know about the learned Maṇḍana Mishra from Kumarila Bhatta of Prayāga tīrtha reached Mandaleshwar and found that even ladies of that town were well versed in Sanskrit. When he asked the ladies returning home from the river, as to the exact location of the house of Maṇḍana Mishra, he was astonished at the erudition of the ladies who gave the reply in the form of a Sanskrit verse.

स्वतः प्रमाणं परतः प्रमाणं कीराङ्गना यत्र च संगिरन्ते |¹¹⁸
द्वारस्थनीडान्तरसंनिरुद्धाः जानीहि तन्मण्डनपण्डितौकः ||

Meaning that, that is the house of Mandana Mishra where on the phials or verandahs of the house even the parrots would be discussing about the philosophical terms like “**Svataḥ pramāṇa or parataḥ pramāṇa**,” etc. Such was the educational standard at Mandaleshwar during the period of Shaṅkara Bhagavatpāda.¹¹⁹

Shaṅkara met Maṇḍana Mishra and had 21 days of continued debate with him. Sarasvatī,¹²⁰ wife of Maṇḍana Mishra, who was herself an erudite scholar,

¹¹⁶ Publicity and propaganda. A drum, though making a loud noise, is hollow inside.

¹¹⁷ West Nimar Gazetteer has presented a great deal of information on Mandana Mishra at Mandaleshvara.

¹¹⁸ Yatra giro vadanti, is a variant reading

¹¹⁹ WNG also tells us that Maheshvara or Mahishmati was the karmabhumi also of Murari Kavi of Anargharaghava fame, an immortal work. So the former Nimar District was a great center of learning and spiritual enlightenment.

¹²⁰ Also famed as Bhārati.

was agreed upon by the two scholars as the Umpire. Sarasvati rightly upheld the doctrine of Advaita over the doctrine of Karma Mīmāṃsā. As per the terms of the debate, Maṇḍana Mishra having accepted the defeat became the disciple of Shaṅkara and was initiated by him to the order of sanyāsa, and was given the name of Sureshvarāchārya.

Sureshvarāchārya was not only the foremost among the disciples of the Ādi Shaṅkara but was Also entrusted by him the responsibility to supervise the functions of all the maṭhas established by Shaṅkara with his headquarters at Kanchi Kamakoti Peetha at Kanchi along with his Guru [?]. Ādi Shaṅkara ascended the Sarvagna Peeth and attained Siddhi at the age of 32 in the year 477 B.C. on the Shukla Paksha Ekādaśī of the month of Vaiśākha, by entering the cave in the Garbhagrha of Goddess Kāmākshī at Kāñchīpuram.

सदाशिवसमारम्भां शङ्कराचार्यमध्यमाम् ।
अस्मदाचार्यपर्यन्तां वन्दे गुरुपरम्पराम् ॥

Let us see, i.e. read, what the *Shankaradigvijaya* has to say about all this. [Yet to be seen]

H. D. Sankalia and the West Nimar Gazetteer inform us that there was a deep association of Maṇḍana Mishra with Maheshvara, i.e. Māhishmatī to the extent that even today there is a place, area or region there named as Maṇḍanakho.

Recently I have come across and read a book on Maheśvara, etc. named Māhishmatī Smārikā. It may be added that what I saw was marked as vol. 1 of a series. We don't know if future vols. were published or not.

The Tourist Trade Contributions

Excite Travel

East of the main river crossing at Barhawa, the Narmada dips southwards, sweeps North again to form a wide bend, and then forks around a two kilometer-long wedge-shaped outcrop of sandstone. Seen from above the island, cut by several deep ravines, bears an uncanny resemblance to the “Om” symbol. This, coupled with the presence on its sheer south-facing side of a revered *Shiva-lingam*, has made Omkareshwar, 77 km south of Indore, one of the most sacred Hindu sites in central India. [A good writing for a change!]

Since ancient times, pilgrims have flocked here for *darshan* and a holy dip in the river. Until recently, however, few foreign visitors knew of the village’s existence; but it is among the region’s most atmospheric spots, and anyone who can survive for a couple of days without a comfortable hotel room is likely to enjoy it. Ruined temples, wayside shrines, bathing places, and caves inhabited by chillum-smoking Shivaite *sadhus* are dotted around the island, strung together by an old-paved pilgrims’ trail.

From the bus stand at the bottom of the village [?], Omkareshwar’s only street runs 400m uphill to a ramshackle square, where you’ll find most of the *dharamshalas*, *chai* shops, and a handful of stalls hawking lurid *puja* paraphernalia (including the excellent stylized **maps** taken home by pilgrims as souvenirs of their visits). The island itself is connected to the mainland by a high concrete footbridge, and by flat-bottomed ferries that shuttle between the ghats. Once across, you’re soon swallowed up by the crowded narrow lane leading to the main temple.

The prominent white *shikhara* that now soars above the **Shri Omkar Māndhātā Mandir** is a relatively new addition to the dense cluster of buildings on the south side of the island. Below it, the ornate pillars in the assembly hall, or *maṇḍapa* are more representative of the shrine’s great antiquity. [N.B.] Myths relating to the origins of the deity in the low ceilinged sanctum date back to the second century BC. Another of India’s twelve **jyotirlingas** (“*linga* of light”) it is said by the Hindus to have emerged spontaneously from the earth after a struggle between Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. (Ref. Excite Travel). Cf. Liṅgodbhava. But this story does not bring in any mountain.

Indian Heritage.

The Omkareshvara temple is built in the North Indian style of architecture, with high spires. Devotees consider worship to *Panchamukha* Ganesha to be very auspicious. There is a shrine to Annapūrṇā. Shiva lingas of various sizes are sold in great numbers in this place. [Rambling thoughts!]

Omkareshwar is situated on the Mandhata hills in Madhya Pradesh, known in ancient times as Shivapuri. The temple dates back to the Krita Yuga. River Narmada flows here around the Māndhātā Hill in the form of an Om (Om karam) [!]. The Jyotir Liṅgam split in two, and there are two Shiva Lingams, Omkareshwar and Amaleshwar (Amareshwar).

Māndhātā was a great Emperor of the Ikshvāku clan who ruled this land. He did great penance in this land and there is an āshrama called Māndhātā Ashrama here. [Noteworthy]

It is said that once sage Nārada during his visit to the Vindhya sang the praise of Mount Meru to Mount Vindhya. On hearing this, Mount Vindhya prayed to Lord Shiva to gain in importance. Lord Shiva blessed him and appeared here as Omkareshvara and Amareshvara and gave the boon of growing, but without hindering Shiva devotees. But the Vindhya did not stop growing, and even obstructed the sun and the moon. Sage Agastya subdued its growth by saying it should not grow till he gets back there. He never went back and hence the growth was arrested. [Just a fable.]

In our childhood we had heard another story. Vindhya started growing and going up and up. The sun was blocked. There was darkness everywhere. There was chaos. The gods approached Maharshi Agastya for help. He came. Vindhya prostrated in reverence. Agastya asked Vindhya not to get up until he returned. But he never returned.

It is said that going to the south is the end—no return.

Note: Good writing. This web site is worth exploring further. Seems to have writings on many temples. The top reads: Indian Heritage—Temples—Jyotirlingas – Omkareshwar.

The bottom gives the URL as

<http://www.saigan.com/heritage/temple/jyotir4.html>

Note the no. 4 after jyotir.

The following additional information to access further items appears at the bottom. This may be a kind of index. Jyotirlinga Sthalam

Mystic India

It has good picture of Omkara-Mandhata Island and its surroundings.

Shri Omkar Mandhata:

The temple stands on a one mile long [?], half a mile wide island that has been formed by the fork of the Narmada. The soft stone of which it was constructed has lent its pliable surface to a rare degree of detailed work, of which the frieze of figures on the upper portion is the most striking. Also intricately carved is the stone roof [!] of the temple. Enriching the shrine are verandas with columns which are carved in circles, polygons and squares. [We are not sure if the writer was sure about what he was writing.]

Spiritual journeys.net

Omkareshwar: Omkareshwar has a gorgeous idyllic setting. The sacred island, shaped like the holiest of all Hindu symbols, ‘Om’, has drawn hundreds of generations of pilgrims. Here, at the confluence of the rivers Narmada and Kaveri, the devotees have gathered to kneel before the Jyotirlingam (one of the twelve throughout India) at the temple of **Shri Omkar Mandhata**. The work of nature complements those of man to provide a setting awe-inspiring in its magnificence. The temple is a huge imposing stone structure with the inner sanctum deep inside. The construction itself is without any cement with beautiful carvings on the support structure.

And what a glorious sight, with the Narmadā splashing along her rocky course and the Kāverī tumbling in adolescent glee from either side. ”They flow in their own individual vastness and then merge into that mysterious Oneness.” Adi Shankara lived and practiced here [what?].

Templenet

TempleNet seems to be a sensible source. We have here only one of their contributions on Omkareshwar, but it seems they have descriptions of all the dozen of them. This source seems to be learned. Their note on this temple ends with the

Sanskrit verse **Kāverikā-Narmadayoḥ...** OJTT says that this *stotra* is composed by Adi Shankaracharya. One another source too says so, but there has not been any authentication as yet.

Omkareshwar located in Madhya Pradesh, on the **Māndhātā** hill on the banks of the **Narmadā** is one of the 12 revered Jyotirlinga shrines of Shiva. It is located at a distance of about 12 miles from Moratakkā in Madhya Pradesh.

The river Narmada branches into two and forms an island named **Māndhātā** or **Shivapurī** in the center. The shape of the island resembles that of the visual representation of the Omkara sound, Om. There are two temples here, one [dedicated?] to Omkareshwar and one to Amareshwar.

Legend has it that the Vindhya mountain prayed to Shiva - Omkareshwara and was blessed here. Legend also has it that upon the request of the Devas, the Shivalinga split into two, one half being Omkareshwar and the other Amaleshwara or Amareshwara. King **Mandhata** of the **Ikshvaku** clan is believed to have worshipped Shiva here.

Govinda Bhagavatpāda, the guru of **Shankarāchārya**, is believed to have lived here in a cave.

The temple can be reached by ferry from the banks of the river. [Old story dated prior to 1979 when the bridge was constructed.] The Omkareshvara temple built in the **Nagara** style is characterized by a lofty shikhara. There are also shrines to Annapūrṇā and Gaṇeśha here. [There are many more. It is a Paradise for Pilgrims. These are all popular writings for the people to get excited and use the services of travel agents to help them make more money.]

One More Contribution

The important part of the town containing the famous Jyotirlinga, Omkareshwar temple, is situated on the island formed in the Narmadā and the rest of the town formed in the southern bank of the river.

In the ancient times the village was situated on the island hill and it was considered as a town-ship, the remains of which are still extant. Later on the habitations are shifted down-ward touching the bank of Narmada and dwindled to about 600 and then gradually increased to 1350 in the 1970 census and to about 6000 by 1995 [Wonderful writing! Deserves award of a special reward].

It is still increasing owing to tourist facilities and the construction of the Cantilever bridge in 1979 across the Narmada in the midst of the town.

* * *

Generally the writers appearing on the Internet—and there are scores of them—do not mention that there is a palace of the Raja. Also the name of the place mentioned by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, is *Godarpura*. But this is the name of the settlement located on the southern bank of the Narmada. We may call it the South Māndhātā,

All the 'Rajas' were wiped off by the Congressite independent Government of India (Sovereign Democratic Republic). So how could they of the Old Order exist in the new India? Their palaces too might have been wiped off. However, many pictures of this holy island show the grand and imposing structures of the palace of the Raja. [This was written long ago. Man grows in age as well as knowledge if he wants.]

A special note: More has been written in the Internet on this temple than any other Jyotirlinga Temple in India. This may be declared at least on the basis of what I have seen so far. This temple is romantic. It has many legends and stories in the background as the basis.



Some writers mention the Cantilever type bridge, 270 ft. above the water level, constructed in 1979, which has increased the grandeur, traffic and population of the holy site. There are numerous descriptions of this Island on the Internet. None gives a picture of the bridge, although it was constructed in 1979. OM—

Darshanika has a picture with this bridge. [We have secured some pictures showing the bridge as well.]

Exact location in terms of latitude and longitude: 22° 14' N. 76° 17' E.

Railway station: Omkareshwar Road. The temple is located 7 miles (12 kms.) from this Railway station. One writer says that the actual name of this Rly. station is Moratakka. He criticizes others who name the nearest Railway Station as Omkareshwar. However, Moratakka is far away from the Railway line and is located in the southwest direction from the Omkareshwar Railway Station. But it seems that both the names refer to one and the same station. One may be the actual name and another only a popular one. This matter needs more investigation and explanation.

Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation:

Omkāreshwar: Omkāreshwar, the sacred island, shaped like the holiest of all Hindu symbols¹²¹, 'Om', has drawn to it hundreds of generations of pilgrims. Here, at the confluence of the rivers Narmada and Kaveri, the devotees gather to kneel before the Jyotirlinga (one of the twelve throughout India) at the temple of Shri Omkara Mandhata. And here, as in so many of Madhya Pradesh's sacred shrines, the works of Nature complement those of man to provide a setting awe-inspiring in its magnificence. [This is copied by many advertisers in an attempt to make a mountain of money out of this holy mountain. Utterly disgusting.]

This writing contains a picture of probably the island, but is not distinct enough. The following statement appears under the picture:

The island comprises two lofty hills and is divided by a valley in such a way that it appears in the shape of the sacred Hindu symbol 'OM' from above. [A fairy tale so far.] Between the precipitous hills of the Vindhya on the North and the Satpura on the South, the Narmada forms a deep silent pool, which in former times was full of alligators and fish, so tame as to take grain from human hand. This pool is 270 ft. below the cantilever type bridge constructed in 1979. The bridge has enhanced scenic beauty of the place, making it exceedingly picturesque.

¹²¹ A fairy tale so far. No one has shown a real picture. All sing the same song.

Temples, Deities
And
Outstanding Landmarks

01. Amaleśvara (same as Amareśvara and Mamaleśvara)
02. Amareśvara (See # 1)
03. Annapūrṇā
04. Āshāpurī
05. Bhīma Arjuna
06. Brahmā
07. Bṛdheśvara (?)¹²²
08. Chand Suraja Gate
09. Dvārakādhīsha
10. Gaurī Somanātha
11. Gāyatrī
12. Govindeśvara Guphā
13. Govindeśvara Mandira
14. Hanūmān
15. Kāśī Viśveśvara
16. Kedāreshvara
17. Kuntī Mātā (cf. # 5)
18. Mahākāleshvara
19. Mahākālī (Cāmuṇḍā) (Never finished)
20. Mamaleśvara, same as Amareśvara
21. Mārkaṇḍeya Saṃnyāsa Āśrama
22. Mārkaṇḍeya Shilā
23. Omkāra Maṭha
24. Pañcamukhī Gaṇesha.
25. Parameśvara (same as Amareśvara)
26. Ramakrishna Mission
27. Ṛṇamukteśvara
28. Siddhavarakūṭa (Jaina)
29. Siddhanātha, Siddhinātha, Siddheśvara
30. Sikh Gurudvārā
31. Shrī Krishna Virāṭ Svarūpa
32. Viṣṇu

¹²² See *History and culture of the Indian people*, Vol. 5., illustrations at the end.

Temples

Amareshvara Temple at Māndhātā



अमराणां शतैश्चैव सेवितो ह्यमरेश्वरः ।
तथैव ऋषिभिश्चैव¹²³ तेन पुण्यतमो महान् ॥

A nice eulogy of Amareshvara quoted by STD from *Skanda Purāṇa*, Revā Khaṇḍa, 28:133. Captain Forsyth says: Both Omkareśvara and Amreśvara Śiva Lingas are equally honored and worshiped by the pilgrims. Our question is : How any one can assert categorically and emphatically that there is only one Jyotirlinga that is worshiped at Omkāra Māndhātā Dhāma? cf. **Jyotirlinge mahādivye varṇite te mahāmune!**

It must have been, maybe, 10-15 years ago that I read about a Śiva Temple on the bank of the River Narmada, which was enriched by the *Mahimnastotra* of Pushpadanta engraved on its wall. This happened while preparing for a religious discourse delivered to an audience of Śiva devotees in Columbia, Missouri, celebrating the Shivarātri festival.

Little did I think at that time that I would be studying the same temple and the hymn inscribed therein sometime in the future and that in the middle of the year

¹²³ We have a variant reading--*r̥ṣiṣaṅghaiś* ca.

2001 I would come across the same temple and the hymn in connection with my search and research on Omkāra Māndhātā and Its Holy Environs (earlier title of our Notebook).

There cannot be two Śiva temples on the bank of the River Narmadā made holier by the *Mahimnastotra*! The two must be one and the same, so I thought. And yes, I found that W. Norman Brown had prepared and published his critical and illustrated edition of the *Mahimnastotra* using this very inscription, inscribed on the walls of the Amareśvara Temple at South Mandhata as the primary basis for his text.

Editor Brown says in his Foreword: Got a photograph of the inscription at the Amareśvara Temple at Māndhātā, in the Nimad District which was kindly supplied by the Archaeological Survey of India.



And he says in his Introduction, p. 3: The earliest known text is a stone inscription at the Amareśvara Temple at Mandhata in the district of Nimād on the northern [sic] bank¹²⁴ of the Narmadā river. This is dated, but unfortunately the second digit of the date [year] is damaged [?] and the year might be either Samvat 1120 or 1220. The complete date works out to be either November 21, 1063 A.D. or October 27 1163 A.D.¹²⁵

See N. P. Chakravarti, *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 25, part 4, October 1939 pp. 183-185. This inscription is reproduced and discussed by Gaurishankar Ojha in *Kalyāṇa*, bhāga 8, aṅka 1 [?], Gita Press, Gorakhpur, Samvat 1990, (August 1933),

¹²⁴ The temple is not located on the northern bank but on the southern bank, exactly opposite to the Omkareshvara temple complex. May be it is on the northern wall. There seems to be some confusion. To be resolved. The matter needs further investigation as to what Brown said and what is the fact. VERIFY. This note was prepared earlier. Since then much water has rolled down the River of Narmada.

¹²⁵ Rahman Ali to note.

pp. 467-471. [Ojhā's paper not yet seen. I wrote to the Press. My request went straight into their waste paper basket. This is not an exception. This has been a rule in the present study. People are so busy that they don't even acknowledge our letter. This has been a very sad experience.]

And here is Chakravarti :

N. P. Chakravarti, "A Note on the Halāyudha stotra in the Amareśvara Temple," *Epigraphia Indica*, 25:105 [183?] ff.

Sanskrit Stotras in Amareshvara Temple

Chakravarty says:

There are several Sanskrit *stotras* engraved on the side walls of the *ardhamanḍapa* [front portico ?] in the Amareśvara Temple at Māndhātā....The northern wall contains three of these, viz. (1) a *stotra* in 8 lines and 9 verses in praise of the river Narmadā, (2) the well known Śiva-Mahimna stotra in 40 verses taking up 22 lines, and (3) a single verse in 3 lines in praise of Śiva and Pārvatī. [Nos. 1 and 3 not yet seen.]

The main record on the southern wall contains the text of the *Halāyudha-stotra*. [very imp. to note.]....I have already noticed these records in the *Annual Report, Arch. Survey of India*, for the year 1937-38 in the chapter on Epigraphy. Though Hiralal¹²⁶ noticed all these records as unimportant,¹²⁷ I found the colophon of the *Halāyudha-stotra* to be of sufficient interest for the history of Sanskrit literature.

There are a number of grammatical and other errors, particularly in the portion which is the writer's own composition....These mistakes show that the writer, though he calls himself a Pandit, was not well versed in Sanskrit.

The record opens with the phrase *Oṃ namaḥ Śivāya* which is immediately followed by the *Halāyudha-stotra* in praise of Śiva. The *stotra* actually finishes in v. 63, the last verse being a colophon containing an account of the author of the hymn. This is immediately followed by another hymn (ll. 48-50) in 5 verses the text of which is identical with that found in the *Śiva-dvādaśa-nāma-stotra* and gives the 12 principle names of Śiva. Then comes a verse enumerating five

¹²⁶ *List of inscriptions in the C. P. and Berar*, 2nd ed., p. 84, No. 151.

¹²⁷ Since it did not contain any historical information.

jyotirlingas, viz., those at Avimukta (Benares) and Kedāra, besides Oṃkāra, Amara and Mahākāla (at Ujjayinī). It may be noted here that though the names of Oṃkāra and Amara have been given separately, the eight other great lingas have been omitted in this list. [An important point to note.]

And here is the original in Devanāgarī:

अविमुक्तश्च केदार ओंकारश्चामरस्तथा ।
पञ्चमस्तु महाकालः पञ्च लिङ्गाः प्रकीर्तिताः ॥

Now अविमुक्त (1) is in Vāraṇasi, U. P., केदार (2) in the Himālayas, ओंकार (3) and अमर (4) both in Oṃkāra Māndhātā dhāma (North & South), and (5) महाकाल in उज्जयिनी.

There are three in M.P., i.e. Mahākāla, Oṃkāra & Amara.¹²⁸

Chakravarti continues:

The last line contains the date, undoubtedly of the setting of the record, which I have read as *Samvat 1[1] 20....*The reading of the second digit is, however, uncertain, which may be read as 2. The same date is given at the end of the *Mahimna-stava* found engraved on the northern wall which was also written by the same Paṇḍita mentioned there as Gāndhadvaja and also at the end of the *Narmadā stotra....*But in these instances also the second digit is not clear...If the year is 1120 the date would be 1063 and if read as 1220 it would be 1163.¹²⁹

It is significant to note here that a specific figure (**aṅka**) appears as doubtful in all the three cases. It may not be an error, but a kind of correction, amendment, or overwriting. A character in stone, cut in a specific way, cannot be easily changed. [cf. Hindi saying: **Patthara para lakīra**—cannot be changed] This dating needs special, critical, scientific, and systematic examination. Maybe electronic or microscopic investigation clears the doubt.

Chakravarti also discusses Bhojanagara and Someśvaradevamāṭha. This matter needs more investigation. No information is available as to who constructed the temple.

¹²⁸ Provided we regard the last two as separate.

¹²⁹ But Hira Lal had no doubt about the date at all. He takes it to be 1120 without any question or hesitation. The same is true of Rahman Ali in his book on Temples of Madhya Pradesh. I call them arm-chair researchers.

More on Amareśvaratīrtha

From the Stone Inscription
Preserved Therein

प्रथमं तु महादेवं द्वितीयं च महेश्वरम् ।
तृतीयं शङ्करं ज्ञेयं चतुर्थं वृषभध्वजम् ॥
पञ्चमं कृत्तिवासं च षष्ठं कामाङ्गनाशनम् ।
सप्तमं देवदेवेशं श्रीकण्ठं चाष्टमं स्मृतम् ॥
नवमम् ईश्वरं ज्ञेयं दशमं पार्वतीप्रियम् ॥
रुद्रमेकादशं नाम द्वादशं शिवमुच्यते ॥
द्वादशैतानि नामानि उभये सन्ध्यत् यः पठेत् ॥

The editor recommends the reading of M Manuscript—
त्रिसन्ध्यं यः पठेत्तरः

We regard it as far-fetched. Could we read -- उभे सन्ध्ये तु यः पठेत्
Or, उभयोः सन्ध्ययोः पठेत्, provided it is correct grammatically.

गोघ्नः कृतघ्नश्चैव [!] ब्रह्महा गुरुतल्पकः ।
गोघ्नश्चैव कृतघ्नश्च [we suggest]
स्त्रीबालघातकश्चैव सुरापी वृषलीपतिः ।
मुच्यते सर्वपापेभ्यो विष्णुलोकं स गच्छति ॥

अविमुक्तश्च केदार ओंकारश्चामरस्तथा ।
पञ्चमस्तु महाकालः पञ्च लिङ्गाः प्रकीर्तिताः ॥

अज्ञानाज्ज्ञानतो वापि यद्विरुद्धमनुष्ठितम् ।
तत्सर्वं पशुभूपस्य क्षन्तव्यं कारणेश्वर ॥

स्वस्ति । श्रीभोजनगरे श्रीसोमेश्वरदेवमठनिवासी नंदियडविनिर्गतः प्रणामगोत्रः[.]
यमनियमसंयमस्वाध्यायध्यानानुष्ठानरतः[.] परमपाशुपताचार्यः[.] भट्टारकश्रीभाव
वाल्मीकः । श्रीअमरेश्वरदेवत्रैलोक्याधिपतेः ध्यानपुण्यस- -एतच्छिष्यदृष्टाधिकप्रदान रत
भट्टारकश्रीभाववाल्मीकः त्रिकालसन्ध्यासमाधिकरणगुरुपारंपर्यविधानयुक्तः ।
श्रीअमरेश्वरदेवपादपङ्कजभ्रमराध्वनीनपथश्रान्ततपोधनाभ्यागतालयसन्तापः ।
श्रीअमरेश्वरदेववीक्षणमूर्तिसदानिवासी भट्टारकश्रीभावसमुद्रः । पण्डित भावविरञ्चिः
प्रणमति शिवम् ।

ॐ स्वस्ति श्री अमरेश्वरदेवस्यायतने त्रैलोक्यविश्रुते स्थाने देवदानवदुर्जयदेवगुरुतपो –
धनशुश्रूषारतपरमभट्टारकश्रीसुपूजितराशिः । एतच्छिष्यविवेकराशिः । पुनः तस्य शिष्येण
चपलगौत्रविनिर्गतसहजभक्तिशान्तमूर्तिपण्डितगान्धध्वजेन परमभक्त्या
महिम्नहलायुधस्तुतिम् आत्मस्यार्थे [!] स्वयं लिखितमिति । संवत् ११२० कार्तिक
वदि १३ । मङ्गलम् । महाश्रीः ।¹³⁰

Amareśvara -- how and why it became so popular.

The following statement appearing on p. 469 of the *East Nimar Gazetteer* deserves attention.

As stated above, Bhārata Singh **restored the worship of Shiva to the island, which was inaccessible** (emphasis added).

Omkāreshvara Darshanikā issued by the Managing Trust of the Temple has many more details about the fight between the Bhila chieftain (lord of the island) and the chief priest Daryao Gosain. The latter had to seek help of the Maharaja of Jaipur, who deputed [his brother] Bharat Singh to subdue the Bhil chieftain. Finally the entire tussle ended with the marriage of Bharat Singh with the only daughter of Nathu Bhil.¹³¹ The associates of Bharat Singh got married with some other Bhil girls and they all settled in Māndhātā in the year 1165 A.D.¹³²

It is our conjecture that since the deity on the island was inaccessible, the one named Amareshwar [in the south] got prominence and became popular. It was situated on the mainland and not across a turbulent river on the top of a mountain. It was easily accessible by all. Accessibility may be a vital contri-butory cause in favor of its becoming so popular and an object of great veneration. It might have been considered as holy as the deity on the top of the Mount Mandhata. The extent of the holiness is a function of the faith of the devotees. *Darshanika* gives many reasons why Amareshvara acquired such an exalted position. However, it may be added here that some reasons are reasonable, but many of them are simply a loose talk—nonsense and rubbish.

¹³⁰ The editor has noted many an error in the original suggesting a plethora of changes and improvements. To us all this seems far beyond our understanding.

¹³¹ It was not just a simple end. The fact is that Chauhan Bharat Singh became the Lord of the Land.

¹³² An important date to note.

Moreover, Amareshwar at Māndhātā was the family deity [Kuladevatā, Iṣṭadeva] of Paramāra kings of Dhārā who visited it for worship and honored Brāhmaṇas with donations, etc.¹³³

It is noteworthy here that while one Paramāra inscription honors Amareshvara and its environs by naming them as ---**tīrtha**, another calls them as **kshetra**. The colophon of the **stotras** engraved on the walls of the Amareśvara Temple [as presented above] goes further and declares: **Śrī Amareśvaradevasyāyatane trailokyaviśrute sthāne**.



¹³³ Hiralal, Inscriptions in CP and Berar, pp. ?? .

अमरकंटपर्वतमाहात्म्यम्¹³⁴

सिद्धिक्षेत्रं परं तात पर्वतो ह्यमरकटः ॥
सर्वदेवाश्रितो यस्मादृषिभिः परिसेवितः ॥ १० ॥
सिद्धविद्याधरा भूत-गंधर्वाः स्थानमुत्तमम् ॥
दृश्यादृश्याश्च राजेन्द्र सेवन्ते सिद्धिकाक्षिणः ॥ ११ ॥
अहं च परमं स्थानं ततः प्रभृति संश्रितः ॥
अत्र प्रणवरूपो वै स्थाने तिष्ठत्युमापतिः ॥ १२ ॥
श्रीकंठः सगणः सर्व-भूतसंघैर्निषेवितः ॥
अस्माद्गिरिवराद्भूप वक्ष्ये तीर्थस्य विस्तरम् ॥ १३ ॥
यानि संतीह तीर्थानि पुण्यानि नृपसत्तम ॥
यानि यानीह तीर्थानि नर्मदायास्तटद्वये ॥ १४ ॥
न तेषां विस्तरं वक्तुं शक्तो ब्रह्मापि भूपते ॥
योजनानां शतं साग्रं श्रूयते सरिदुत्तमा ॥ १५ ॥
विस्तरेण तु राजेन्द्र अर्धयोजनमायता ॥
षष्टितीर्थसहस्राणि षष्टिकोट्यस्तथैव च ॥ १६ ॥
पर्वतादुदधिं यावदुभे कूले न संशयः ॥ १७ ॥
सप्तषष्टिसहस्राणि सप्तषष्टिशतानि च ॥
सप्तषष्टिस्तथा कोट्यो वायुस्तीर्थानि चाब्रवीत् ॥ १८ ॥
परं कृतयुगे तानि यांति प्रत्यक्षतां नृप ॥
पश्यन्ति मानवाः सर्वे सततं धर्मबुद्धयः ॥ १९ ॥
यथा यथा कलिर्घोरो वर्तते दारुणो नृप ॥
तथा तथाल्पतां यांति हीनसत्त्वा यतो नराः ॥ २० ॥
जालेध्वरादितीर्थानि पर्वतेऽस्मिन्नराधिप ॥
पितृवृक्षिप्रदान्याहुः स्वर्गमोक्षप्रदानि च ॥ २१ ॥
श्रेष्ठं दारुवने तत्र चरुकासंगमः शुभः ॥
उत्तरे नर्मदायास्तु चरुकेध्वरमुत्तममम् ॥ २२ ॥
दारुकेध्वरतीर्थं च व्यतीपातेध्वरं तथा ॥
पातालेध्वरतीर्थं च कोटियज्ञं तथैव च ॥ २३ ॥
इति चैवोत्तरे कूले रेवाया नृपसत्तम ॥

¹³⁴ cf. Amarakantaka, the origin of Narmadā

अमरेश्वरपार्श्वे च लिङ्गान्यष्टोत्तरं शतम् ॥२४॥
 वरुणेश्वरमुख्यानि सर्वपापहराणि च ॥२५॥
 मांधातृपुरपार्श्वे च सिद्धेश्वरयमेश्वरौ ॥
 ॐकारात्पूर्वभागे च केदारं तीर्थमुत्तमम् ॥ २६ ॥
 * * *

अस्मिंस्तु पर्वते तात रुद्राणां कोटयः स्थिताः ॥
 स्नानैस्तुष्टिर्भवेत्तेषां गंधमाल्यानुलेपनैः ॥ २९ ॥
 प्रीतास्तेऽपि भवंत्यत्र रुद्रा राजन्त्र संशयः ॥
 जपेन पापसंशुद्धिर्ध्यानेनानन्त्यमश्नुते ॥ ३० ॥
 दानेन भोगानाप्नोति इत्येवं शंकरोऽब्रवीत् ॥
 पर्वतात्पश्चिमे देशे स्वयं देवो महेश्वरः ॥
 स्थितः प्रणवरूपोऽसौ जगदादिः सनातनः ॥ ३१ ॥
 * * *

एवं तेषां भवेत्सर्वं ये मृता ह्यमरेश्वरे ॥
 अग्निप्रवेशं यः कुर्याद्भक्त्या ह्यमरकण्टके ॥ ४६ ॥
 स मृतः स्वर्गमाप्नोति यास्यते परमां गतिम् ॥
 स्नानं दानं जपो होमः शुभं वा यदि वाऽशुभम् ॥ ४७ ॥
 पुराणे श्रूयते राजन्सर्वं कोटिगुणं भवेत् ॥
 तस्यास्तीरे तु ये वृक्षाः पतिताः कालपर्यये ॥ ४८ ॥
 नर्मदातोयसंस्पृष्टास्ते यांति परमां गतिम् ॥
 अनिवृत्तिका गतिस्तस्य पवनस्याम्बरे यथा ॥ ४९ ॥
 पतनं कुरुते यस्तु तस्मिंस्तीर्थे नराधिप ।
 कन्यास्त्रीणि सहस्राणि पाताले भोगभागिनः ॥ ५० ॥
 तिष्ठन्ति भवने तस्य प्रेषणे प्रार्थयन्ति च ।
 दिव्यभोगैः सुसम्पन्नः क्रीडते कालमीप्सितम् ॥ ५१ ॥
 पृथिव्यां ह्यासमुद्रायां तादृशो नैव जायते ।
 यादृशोऽयं नरश्रेष्ठ पर्वतोऽमरकण्टकः ॥ ५२ ॥
 * * *

दक्षिणे नर्मदातीरे कपिला तु महानदी ।
 * * *
 साग्रं कोटिशतं तत्र ऋषीणामिति शुश्रुम ॥ ५७ ॥
 तपस्तप्त्वा गतं मोक्षं येषां जन्म न चागमः ।
 येन तत्र तपस्तप्तं कपिलेन महात्मना ॥ ५८ ॥
 तत्र तच्चाभवत्तीर्थं पुण्यं सिद्धनिषेवितम् ।

येन सा कपिलैस्तात सेविता ऋषिभिः पुरा ॥ ५९ ॥
तेन सा कपिलानाम गीता पापक्षयंकरी ।
तत्र कोटिशतं साग्रं तीर्थानाममरेध्वरे ॥ ६० ॥
अहोरात्रोषितो भूत्वा मुच्यते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ॥
दानं च विधिवदत्त्वा यथाशक्त्या द्विजोत्तमे ॥ ६१ ॥

Ref. स्कन्दमहापुराणे (Nag ed.) आवन्त्यखण्डे ५ रेवाख० ३ अ० २१ पृ० १९७

मार्कण्डेय उवाच :-

तत्रैव संगमे राजन्भक्त्या परमया नृप ॥
प्राणांस्त्यजंति ये मर्त्यास्ते यांति परमां गतिम् ॥ १ ॥
संन्यस्तसर्वसंकल्पो यस्तु प्राणान्परित्यजेत् ॥
अमरेध्वरमासाद्य स स्वर्गे नियतं वसेत् ॥ २ ॥
शैलेन्द्रं यः समासाद्य आत्मानं मुंचते नरः ।
विमानेनार्कवर्णेन स गच्छेदमरावतीम् ॥ ३ ॥
नरं पतन्तमालोक्य नगादमरकण्टकात् ।
ब्रुवन्त्यप्सरसः सर्वा मम भर्ता भवेदिति ॥ ४ ॥
समं जलं धर्मविदो वदन्ति सारस्वतं गाङ्गमिति प्रबुद्धाः ।
तस्योपरिष्ठात् प्रवदन्ति तज्ज्ञा रेवाजलं नात्र विचारणास्ति ॥ ५ ॥

* * *

एवं तु कपिला चैव विशल्या राजसत्तम ॥
ईध्वरेण पुरा सृष्टा लोकानां हितकाम्यया ॥ ११ ॥
तत्र स्नात्वा नरो राजन्सोपवासो जितेन्द्रियः
अध्वमेधस्य महतोऽसंशयं फलमाप्नुयात् ॥ १२ ॥
अनाशकं ¹³⁵ च यः कुर्यात्तस्मिंस्तीर्थे नराधिप ॥
सर्वपापविनिर्मुक्तो याति वै शिवमन्दिरम् ॥ १३ ॥
पृथिव्यां सागरान्तायां स्नानदानेन यत्फलम् ॥
विशल्यासङ्गमे स्नात्वा सकृत्तत्फलमश्नुते ॥ १४ ॥
इति श्रीस्कान्दे महापुराणे एकाशीतिसाहस्र्यां संहितायां
पञ्चमे आवन्त्यखण्डे रेवाखण्डे विशल्यासङ्गममाहात्म्यवर्णनं नाम

¹³⁵ Abstaining from food; fast.

त्रयोविंशोऽध्यायः ॥

श्रीमार्कण्डेय उवाच :-

सङ्गमः करनर्मदयोः पुरे मान्धातृसंज्ञिते ।
गत्वा स्नात्वा तर्पयित्वा पितृन् विष्णुपुरे व्रजेत् ॥ १ ॥

इति श्रीस्कान्दे महापुराणे एकाशीतिसाहस्र्यां संहितायां पञ्चमे आवन्त्यखण्डे रेवाखण्डे
करनर्मदासङ्गममाहात्म्यवर्णनं नाम त्रयोविंशोऽध्यायः ॥

श्रीमार्कण्डेय उवाच :-

ॐकारात् पूर्वभागे वै सङ्गमो लोकविश्रुतः ।
रेवया सङ्गता यत्र नीलगङ्गा नृपोत्तम ॥ १ ॥
तत्र स्नात्वा जपित्वा च कोऽर्थोऽलभ्यो भवेद्भुवि ।
* * *

इति श्रीस्कान्दे महापुराणे एकाशीतिसाहस्र्यां संहितायां
पञ्चमे आवन्त्यखण्डे रेवाखण्डे नर्मदामाहात्म्ये नीलगङ्गायाः सङ्गममाहात्म्यवर्णनं नाम
पञ्चविंशोऽध्यायः ॥

मनसाऽपि स्मरेद्यस्तु भक्त्या ह्यमरकण्टकम् ।
चान्द्रायणाधिकं पुण्यं स लभेन्नात्र संशयः ॥ ११२ ॥
अतिपुण्यो गिरिश्रेष्ठो यस्माद् भरतसत्तम ।
अस्मान्नित्यं भवेद् राजन् सर्वपापक्षयंकरः ॥ ११३ ॥
* * *

ब्रह्मेन्द्रविष्णुप्रमुखैर्ह्यमरैश्च सहस्रशः ।
सेव्यते देवदेवेशः शङ्करस्तत्र पर्वते ॥ ११६ ॥
पतनं कुरुते योऽस्मिन् पर्वतेऽमरकण्टके ।
क्रीडते क्रमशो राजन् भुवनानि चतुर्दश ॥ ११७ ॥
* * *

युधिष्ठिर उवाच :-

कोऽप्यत्र विधिरुद्दिष्टः पतने ऋषिसत्तम ।
एतन् मे सर्वमाचक्ष्व संशयोऽस्ति महामुने ॥ १२१ ॥

श्रीमार्कण्डेय उवाच :-

शृणुष्व कथयिष्यामि तं विधिं पाण्डुनन्दन ।
यत् कृत्वा प्रथमं कर्म निपतेत्तदनन्तरम् ॥ १२२ ॥

* * *

अनाशकं तु यः कुर्यात् तस्मिंस्तीर्थे नराधिप ।
मुच्यते सर्वपापेभ्यो रुद्रलोकं स गच्छति ॥ १३२ ॥
अमराणां शतैश्चैव सेवितो ह्यमरेश्वरः ।

तथैव ऋषिसंघैश्च तेन पुण्यतमो महान् ॥ १३३ ॥
समन्ताद्योजनं तीर्थं पुण्यं ह्यमरकण्टकम् ।

रुद्रकोटिसमोपेतं तेन तत् पुण्यमुत्तमम् ॥ १३४ ॥
तस्य पर्वतराजस्य यः करोति प्रदक्षिणम् ।

प्रदक्षिणीकृता तेन पृथिवी नात्र संशयः ॥ १३५ ॥

वाचिकं मानसं चैव कायिकं त्रिविधं च यत् ।

नश्यते पातकं सर्वमित्येवं शङ्करोऽब्रवीत् ॥ १३६ ॥

अमरेश्वरपार्श्वे च तीर्थं शक्रेण नृप ।

तपस्तप्त्वा पुरा तत्र शक्रेण स्थापितं किल ॥ ११७ ॥

* * *

कावेर्याः पूर्वभागे च तीर्थं वै मातृकेश्वरम् ॥ १३९ ॥

इति श्रीस्कान्दे महापुराणे एकाशीतिसाहस्र्यां संहितायां पञ्चमे आवन्त्यखण्डे रेवाखण्डे
त्रिपुरविध्वंसने ज्वालेश्वर ¹³⁶ तीर्थांशमरेश्वरतीर्थमाहात्म्यवर्णनं नामाष्टाविंशोऽध्यायः ॥ २८
। छ ।

¹³⁶ We need to study further the Jvāleshvaratirtha in Amareshvara area.

Govindeshwar Guphā and Mandira:

It is a well-known historical fact¹³⁷ that Jagadguru Ādi Shaṅkarāchārya took his Dīkṣā and education of the Shastras from his Guru Shri Govinda Bhagavadpāda at Omkareshwar. The place on the bank of Narmada where he took his Dikṣā is consecrated by the erection of a temple aptly called the Govindeshwar Temple. The guphā or cave where Govinda Bhagavatpāda performed his penances is also touching the Narmada bank [really?]. It has excellent carvings of different designs on its stone roof¹³⁸ and of human figures in various moods on its pillars inside [imp. to note]. Both the Guphā and the temple are very old and are partially or fully submerged in high floods of the Narmada and had been much damaged.



So Shri Jayendra Sarasvati Svamigal, the [present] Shaṅkaracharya of Shri Kanchi Kamakoti Pitha has, in order to perpetuate the glory of the two great Acharyas, acquired both the Guphā and the temple and made extensive repairs. A big Sabhā Mandapa is also being constructed in front of the Govindeshwar Temple. Ten acres of land of the Mandhata (Island) hill has already been acquired and about two acres is being acquired in the southern part of the town for the whole Shankaracharya complex....at a cost of about Rs. five crores...¹³⁹ (Sections of some writings on temples have been brought here from their original places and reproduced here. This is Mahajan).

¹³⁷ Is it traditional or historical? Is there any documentary evidence? Could it be verified? To this class of writers, the “history” is different from what is generally accepted by the modern world today.

¹³⁸ Is it roof or ceiling?

¹³⁹ A big drum is being beaten, generating a loud noise outside but it is hollow inside.

Gaurī Somanātha Temple¹⁴⁰

Gaurī Somanātha is a star-shaped temple containing a gigantic *liṅgam*. As per local legend, the *liṅgam* was formerly white reflecting the shape [?] of the future birth of anyone looking into it. The Emperor Aurangzeb, the devout son of Islam and arch iconoclast, while passing to the south could not resist the temptation to come to a spot so full of spoils. He came; did some [!] mutilations of idols and stood before the *liṅgam* to test the legend. He saw a pig in it and gave orders to burn it. Since then the *liṅgam* has become black and its properties lost. One fact is however striking. While the *liṅgam* is at least a thousand years old it has retained its ever shining polish as if newly installed. [Mahajan p. 79. Incongruous writing. Pitiable.]

The following is an extract from *Māhiṣmāi smārikā*, p. 96.

गौरी सोमनाथ मन्दिर तालाब के किनारे बना हुआ है। मन्दिर के सामने एक काले पत्थर का नदी अपूर्ण निर्मित दृष्टिगोचर होता है। कलाकार ने इसे अपूर्ण क्यों छोड़ दिया इसका कारण खोजना तर्क से परे की बात है। मन्दिर के सभा मण्डप में अनेक प्रस्तर स्तम्भ हैं। तीन दिशाओं में सीढ़ियाँ हैं। मध्य में कछुए की मूर्ति है जो आत्माभिमुखी गुण के लिए प्रसिद्ध है। गर्भ गृह में एक ही पाषाण का आदम कद से भी ऊँचा शिवलिङ्ग स्थापित है। मूर्ति की पीठ वेसर (गोलाकार) है। शिवलिङ्ग की गोलाई इतनी है कि दो आदमियों के बाहुओं में भी आसानी से नहीं समा सकती। इतना बड़ा शिवलिङ्ग भारतवर्ष में बिरले स्थान पर ही देखा जा सकता है। अधिक ऊँचा शिवलिङ्ग होने के कारण मन्दिर के एक भाग से ऊपर जाने के लिए सीढ़ियाँ बनी हुई हैं। ऊपर जलाभिषेक की पूर्ण व्यवस्था है। इस मन्दिर के सभा मण्डप का जीर्णोद्धार कृष्णा बाई माँ साहेब (होल्कर वंश) ने करवाया था। इस मन्दिर का शेष प्राचीन इतिहास म० प्र० पुरातत्त्व विभाग के पास भी नहीं है।

Mandhata and the Śiva Temple [Anonymous]

The holy city [!] of Omkarji, otherwise called Māndhātā, boasts of two of India's holiest temples dedicated to Śiva. Situated on an island, a mile and a half long, in the middle of sacred Narmadā river, Omkarji is split into two by a deep ravine from north to south. Steep hills dot [!] the southern and eastern parts of the island. The swift and deep river is a haunt of crocodiles. The rocks have a tint of green, which blends beautifully with the dark green foliage and the brown and gray temples which rise in rows. The Birkhala [?] rocks to the east end of the island are

¹⁴⁰ Both Māndhātā and Maheshvara have this temple.

of great sanctity. According to tradition, it was considered meritorious to die at this spot and devotees used to cast themselves into the river, until the practice was ended in 1824. [A mixed writing. The writer is only a copycat. He had no knowledge of what he was writing. Absurd. Disgusting.]

The founder of this holy Shrine was one Raja Mandhatri [!], who claimed descent from the Sun. Mandhatri performed a great sacrifice to Śiva [note--not *tapas*] on the island which was named after the king. [Evidence?]

The great temple of Omkarji on the Birkhala rocks [!]¹⁴¹ is a picturesque building with courtyard and colonnades supported by massive pillars [?]. The original shrine of Amaleshwar or Mamaleshwar [?], which contains the specially holy *lingam* is on the southern part of the island.¹⁴² The original site was swallowed by the growing jungle. Peshwa Bajji Rao II of Poona tried to find and restore the shrine, but could not do so and built a new temple. The original site was later found and a temple built over it, but Peshwa's shrine retains the name of Mamlleshwar [?]. There is a colossal Nandi (bull) carved in green stone in front of the Gauri Somanatha Temple on the precipice on the western part of the island. [The writer alone may understand what he wrote. To us all this is mumbo jumbo. Wandering writing. Restless rambling. Not cohesive at all.] (Anonymous p. 66?).



Courtesy: Omkareshwar Trust

¹⁴¹ We are not sure if the writer was sure of what he was writing. A parrot says “Rāma Rāma.” Does he know what it means!

¹⁴² Nonsense and rubbish.

Māndhātā¹⁴³

Vaiṣṇava Temples

(46) An interesting collection of medieval images of Viṣṇu, together with a statue of Viṣṇu's Boar-Incarnation, has been placed inside a broken old temple, called *Chaubīs avatār kā Mandir*. The statues of Viṣṇu are nine in number, and each of them has a short inscription, telling us which form of the God it represents. These inscriptions are : (1) *Viṣṇu*; (2) *Adhokshaja* ¹⁴⁴ [The epithet is very significant, though uncommon.] (3) *Padmanābha* ; (4) *Purushottama* ; (5) *Nārāyaṇa*; (6) *Vāsudeva* ; (7) *Upendra* ; (8) *Mādhava*; (9) *Naśāgha*(*Nasha+agha* ?=*naśyanti aghāni yasmāt?*) The explanatory labels evidently have been placed upon the statues for the same purpose as those at Bheraghat [Find out]. The statues represented rather uncommon [!] types of Viṣṇu, and it was of importance to the worshipper to know the name of each image, when he was doing *pūjā* to it ; otherwise the effect of the worship might become just the reverse of what he expected. The only difference between those nine images of Viṣṇu besides their inscriptions lies in the distribution of the *chihnas*, or distinguishing marks of the Gods, over his four hands. The marks are four : the wheel (*cakra*) ; the club (*gadā*) ; the conch (*śaṅkha*) ; and the lotus flower (*padma*). Unfortunately, however, many of the hands of the nine images, together with their marks, are broken and lost, and this naturally takes away a good deal of the value of this interesting collection. [See if Bheraghat collection is better.]

(47) The temple contains, in addition to the statues just mentioned, an image of Viṣṇu and Lakshmī seated on Garuḍa, a statue of Viṣṇu lying on the serpent Ananta, and one of the boar-incarnation (*Varāha-Avaāra*). The *Varāha* or Boar is much smaller in size than the Boar at Eran, [note] and evidently, also about four or five centuries later. Its body, like that of the Eran statue, is covered with small figures of gods and saints, and near each of its hind legs is a carved wheel, the symbol of Viṣṇu. The legs are broken and the statue evidently has been removed in its present place from somewhere else.

(48) A proposal to remove the statues to some other suitable place close by, where they might be shown to greater advantage, has been given up on account of

¹⁴³ Source is now located. It was brought in but not recorded earlier. It was lost in a sense. But now the Paradise is regained. The source is now noted at the end.

¹⁴⁴ अक्षात् इन्द्रियाज्जायते इति अक्षजं प्रत्यक्षज्ञानम्, तदधरं ग्राहकत्वाभावात् हीनं यस्य सः । अधः कृतं अक्षजम् येन ।

local [?] objection against it. [There was some local live force to decide whether the proposal was good or bad.]

(49) No further repairs are needed to the *Temple of Siddhanātha*, which is the most important ancient monument at Māndhātā [stress added]. It has been very well repaired some years ago, and all that is required for it is to collect the broken fragments lying around it, and to stack them, so as to show their carved surfaces. Provision for this has already been made in the estimate, which Mr. McQuillon has prepared lately, and which has now been sent up to the Chief Commissioner for approval. The temple is interesting on account of its ground-plan, which is cross-shaped, the cell with the *linga* forming the center [imp. to note], while the four arms are made up by the four porticos in front of the doors leading to the sanctum. The carved figures of fighting elephants along the plinth of the temple show that the Rajputs of those days were as fond of that kind of sport as their descendents in the time of the Moghul Emperors. The date of the temple at Māndhātā is not known to us, but it very likely is not less than a thousand years old [imp. to note].

(50) The Rājā of Māndhātā was much interested, when I¹⁴⁵ showed to him the names of some of his ancestors, whom I had found mentioned in the inscriptions at Asīrgaṛh as Governors of that fort in the time of the Moghal Emperors. He got a copy made for me of his pedigree, which he keeps with his family records. This list brings his family up to *Prithirāj*....

(51) Two copper plates of the Paramāra Kings Devapāla and Jayavarman II, have been found at Māndhātā a few years ago. They are now deposited in the Nagpur Museum,¹⁴⁶ where I [Dr. T. Bloch] have examined them and got impressions of them taken. They have recently been edited by the late Professor Kielhorn in the *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. IX, pages 103-123....

Ref. Archaeological Survey, Eastern Circle, Report, 1907-08, pp. 27-28. Author: Dr. T. Bloch.

[This information was found after a great deal of search and research. The inquiry was sent to many. Nobody could locate it. Very sad. Very bad. However, all is well that ends well. It was something which had never happened earlier in my life, but it did not remain so. Ultimately the source was found by me. Paradise lost. Paradise regained. Om is Great!]

¹⁴⁵ Dr. T. Bloch, Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, Eastern Circle, 1907-1908.

¹⁴⁶ Nagpur was the capital of the Central Provinces and Berar, which included the region under our study.

Omkareshwar Temple:

The Omkareshwar temple containing the Jyotirlinga is the main center of attraction and object of veneration. As to who constructed the temple and when, it is all shrouded in mystery [What effort, if any, has been made to find the truth?]. The inner sanctum sanctorum which appears as an independent temple in itself is very old, while the extension [?] of the temple with its imposing Sabhā Maṇḍapa containing huge stone columns with carved human avataric figures appears to belong to the Brahmanical times or Gupta period of 4th or 5th century A.D.



As the sanctum is close to the precipitous bank of the Narmadā River, the extension made is sideways. [Not clear to us at all. It requires a kind of knowledge possessed by the writer.] That is why neither the main door is in front of the deity, nor the Shikhar above it.



The temple is five storeyed.¹⁴⁷ The Raos of Māndhātā used to be the hereditary custodians of the temple. It was declared a Public Trust in 1959. [Mahajan, p. 59]

Other Spots in Ruins

On the north bank of the Narmada¹⁴⁸, a short ¹⁴⁹distance from Omkarji, are ruins of temples dedicated to Lord Vishnu, and also some Jain shrines. There is a temple dedicated to Varāha (boar) incarnation of Vishnu, with a fine representation of the boar, near the point where the river branches into two¹⁵⁰. Carved in green stone are twenty four figures of Vishnu [evidence lacking.] In a ravine, further down the bank, is a huge idol (18 1/2 long¹⁵¹) of the Goddess Cāmuṇḍā [same as described as Kālī---Rāvaṇanālā in the Gazetteer]. The ten-armed deity is shown sporting with lion cubs and human skulls. On her chest is a scorpion and her right a rat. She rests one foot on a prostrate figure. [Anonymous, p. 57]. **Kapolakalpita!** [Nonsense and rubbish. A rambling writing.]

Siddhanāth Temple:

It is on the island hill [Where? We would like to know the exact location]. Siddhnātha though in a dilapidated condition now must have been when intact a

¹⁴⁷ Some say four!

¹⁴⁸ Quite important to note. It is to be remembered that another cluster of holy temples and palaces in what is called Maheshvara is also located about 38 miles down west on the northern bank of the river Narmada.

¹⁴⁹ How short? Every statement is vague, written for the people—simple folks—bhole bhāle rāha calate loga..

¹⁵⁰ First meeting point of Narmada and Kaveri, east of the island.

¹⁵¹ Note the word “long.” Is it standing or lying down?

graceful and imposing structure.¹⁵² On the sides of its huge plinth there are numerous elephants carved out. These are about five feet high executed with singular correctness and excellence of attitude. They are in playful mood with a mahut on and a victim being crushed under feet. The shrine has four doors with four Sabhā Maṇḍapas, each having 18 huge stone pillars elaborately carved with a curious frieze of satyr like figures. The temple is declared as Protected Ancient Monument. Lord Curzon had visited it at the turn of the last century.¹⁵³ [He paid more than a visit!]



It is a fine example of early medieval Brahmanic [?] architecture [**Mukham astiti vaktavyam**]. Its unique feature is a frieze of elephants carved upon a stone slab¹⁵⁴ at its outer perimeter. [There were 50, all mutilated, except two, which are now preserved in the Nagpur Museum and guard its entrance.]

The 24 Avataras is a cluster of Hindu and Jain temples [!¹⁵⁵], remarkable for their skilful use of varied architectural modes.[Most of the above writing is nonsense and rubbish.A sinful act.] [Mahajan, p. 56].

¹⁵² It is believed by some that it was never completed.

¹⁵³ What do you mean? He visited the temple on Oct. 31, 1902.

¹⁵⁴ Thank you very much.

¹⁵⁵ Nonsense and rubbish.

Lord Curzon and the Siddheshvara¹⁵⁶ Temple

John Marshall reports:

The work at the old temple of Siddheśvara at Māndhātā was started under special instructions from His Excellency the Viceroy, who visited the place in October 1902. The temple is situated upon the top of the hill, on the island in the Narmadā, above the famous temple of Oṃkāreśvara.¹⁵⁷ It appears to have been left unfinished, but was intended to be a very fine building. As it stands at present, it consists of the square sanctum, with a doorway in each of its four sides, its walls having been carried up almost to the springing of the spire; but the latter seems never to have been built, though many dressed stones lie about prepared for it.

To make the shrine usable in later times, an unsightly dome, in Muhamadan fashion, was thrown over it. Standing upon the high platform, out in front of each of the four doors, are the great columns of the surrounding *maṇḍapa* or porches. But here again the work has been left unfinished, the architraves alone lying across the tops of the columns. The removal of the ugly dome, and the substitution of something more in keeping with the old work, was the principal item of work to be accomplished here. To build a sculptured stone spire, such as was originally intended, with its mass of fretwork ornament and minor spires and finials grouped about the main tower, would have been altogether out of question, both from the enormous cost and our ignorance of the intended design; while to build anything else approximating that in general outline, though plain, would have been false and out of harmony with the rest of the structure. It only remained, then, to remove the dome and introduce a sunk flat roof, which could not be seen from without, and so leave the building, to all appearances, such as it was before the dome was put on, that is, an unfinished structure. The slabs of this flat roof had to be laid upon the flanges of light –iron girders, laid across from wall to wall, the flanges being sunk into the stone and flash with the same. Other minor repairs were also carried out, the total expenditure being estimated at Rs. 3,430.

When these old decorated temples are the least bit ruinous, they are most dangerous piles to meddle with. Built of heavy blocks of stone, put together without mortar, with little or no bonding, the least settlement in any part often converted the whole of the fabric into a loose unstable mass, simply held together by the jamming of stones in their tendency to collapse. Add to this the frequent,

¹⁵⁶ A kind of official name. Skanda Purāṇa too has this name. Siddheshvara, Siddhanātha and Siddhinātha all are identical. The source appears later.

¹⁵⁷ We need the exact location.

breaking of stone beams and their consequent sagging, with the crushing weight of masonry, above them, and it would be difficult to find a more dangerous structure in which to risk one's life. In the case of cracked beams, angle iron, in short lengths, can be used in a variety of ways to very great advantage; and as our principal object with such buildings is simply to preserve them as ruins from further damage, the look of these temporary struts and supports will be hardly objectionable than a frame placed around a broken museum exhibit to keep it together. At the fine old ruined Vaiṣṇava temple, now being repaired at Jānjgir, we shall have to use some such expedient to support the broken lintel of the great entrance doorway. The lintel of this doorway and the beam above it are richly sculptured with symbolic images and arabesques, and must, although both are cracked through, be retained at any cost. Indeed, to remove them, even if it were desirable, half the front of the building would have to be dismantled.

On account of the peculiar method of construction followed in the erection of these old shrines, where the whole structure, spire included, is erected with an inner and an outer shell, the space between being filled in with dry rubble, and with little or no bonding of the two shells together, it is very difficult to know what to do when we find the outer shell fallen, and the rough back of the inner one exposed. If the original stones of the exterior are still there, they may, under expert guidance, be sorted and rebuilt; but, more often than not, they have long ago been carried away. [Emphasis added]. At Pāli, twelve miles beyond Ratanpur, in the Bilaspur district, is an old sculptured temple much in this condition, so far as its spire is concerned. From the upper half the outer casing of carved stones has fallen, leaving the crowning member supported upon stones of the inner core of masonry. Though it may be possible at some future time, when the more pressing work in the Province is finished and money is available, to reconstruct this outer shell in carved stone work, all we can do with it at present is to convert the whole loose mass, as it stands, into one solid whole by the use of cement grouting. This will not interfere with future restoration, and until then, will protect the tower from any further disintegration. The work has been put in hand.

Imp. note for the source:

This is the end of the extract drawn from pages 57 and 58 of the Archaeological Report by John Marshall, dated 1903. Now begins the extract from pages 6-7 of the same Report for 1905:

In the Central Provinces, the heaviest items of expenditure have been the repairs to the famous temple of Siddheśvara at Māndhātā and to the less known shrine at Sirpur Jānjgir. The first named was visited by Lord Curzon at the end of

1902, and it is on the note that he left behind him and of which the following extract will be read with interest, that all the subsequent measures have been based.

“I visited,” wrote Lord Curzon, “this renowned and sacred island in the Nerbudda on October 31st, 1902, and was equally disappointed with its beauties and its monuments. The only building of any real character or distinction on the island is the Hindu Temple of Siddheśvara Mahādeva. But this is such an absolute ruin as to defy restoration at any but an unpardonable cost. The plinth or platform on which the ruins of the temple stand is of a very curious design, its outer edge consisting of a series of projecting and re-intering angles. The porches in front of the doorways must have been a very striking feature, but are now in a state of irreparable decay. The central shrine has been covered by some pious iconoclast with a low, stunted cupola, such as might be seen in a Muham-madan mosque. This ludicrous erection is in violent contrast to its surroundings and ought to be removed. [N.B.] I presume that the shrine has at one time been covered with the conical Hindu cupola or spire. It would not now be worth while to re-erect this; but it would seem preferable either to cover in the exposed shrine with a flat roof or possibly to put upon it one of the small pointed pyramidal roofs, of which several examples can be seen covering small Hindu shrines in the neighbourhood of the more modern temple in the town, just above the Rao’s palace [N.B. We need more details of this temple].

The only restoration of which the temple of Siddheśvara seems to me profitably to admit is to clear the plinth with the elephant frieze (a really noble feature) to its foundation, to cut away the jungle for a certain space around, so as to constitute a small enclosure, to remove all the fallen and broken stones and to collect against the wall any of these—and there are a great number, including some shattered elephants from the frieze-- that are carved or sculptured. In this way the place might be made to look more tidy. But it can never at anything except a wholly disproportionate cost be made into anything but a ruin.”

The measures ordered by Lord Curzon were begun in 1904, but owing to local difficulties very slow progress was made, and it was not until last year that the work could be carried out in its entirety. The roof, it should be said, which has been erected over the *sanctum*, is flat, but sunk slightly into the top of the building so that it cannot be seen from without.

Siddhavarkut [Siddhavarakūṭa]

East Nimar District Gazeteer

Siddhawarkut (22° 15' N and 76° 14' E)

A place of pilgrimage of considerable antiquity, Siddhawarkut is situated on the mountain peak near Panthia village to the north-east of Māndhātā island on the bank of the river Kāveri, a bifurcated stream of the Narmada. [N.B.] The Jains all over India, from time immortal [?], held this place as one of the *Siddhakṣetras* or a place where one attains salvation. From Māndhātā pilgrims have to engage a ferry for reaching Siddhawarkūt for a distance of about one mile (1.6 kms). The direct way to the place is from Barwah, a railway station on meter gauge of Western Railway, connecting Ajmer-Indore-Khandwa. The place is about 14 miles (22.4 kms.) by a fair weather motorable road from Barwah.

Till the year 1883 the old temples of the place were in ruins. Attempts to restore and reconstruct them were started by Digamber Jain community of Nimar and Malwa since that year. At present, there are eight such temples bearing somewhat new appearance and containing old images found at the place. The oldest of the images bear the dates ranging from the 13th to 15th century. Tirthankar Chandra Prabhu's image has on the pedestal an inscription of A.D. 1222. Besides, a *Mānastambha*--a four faced small temple on a high white marble pillar and a *chhattri* are there. The temples are of black basalt and red granite. The walls of the temples are decorated with modern paintings. The earliest reference to the place is found in an ancient Jain literary work in Prakrit, *Nivvui Kandani*, which describes exact geographical locations of the Jain holy places and gives reasons for their sanctity. [Noteworthy statement.]

An annual fair is held on the 14th and 15th of bright fortnight of the Phālguna. There are *Dharamshalas* providing all facilities to the visitors. The whole area is electrified and has a piped water supply from a well. The cluster of temples pleases the eye of visitors with their lofty pinnacles. There is a primary school. About one mile away from the present day Siddhavarkūṭa there is a beautiful stone-built tank now in disuse and ruins. [How old is this story? 1969?]

Omkareshwara Temple at Coorg



In 1820 a significant building built by Liṅgarājendra was Omkareshwara temple. This has both Islamic and Gothic style of architecture. There is a tank in front of the temple. There is a footpath leading to a small “Mantapa.” The surrounding place is abode with peace. There is a story behind building of the temple.

It is said that Liṅgarajendra killed an honest and pious Brahman to fulfill his political ambitions. That Brahman became a “Brahmarākshasa” and started teasing the king with troubles. It left the king only when the king brought a “Shivaliṅga” from Kashi and installed it after building a temple. The shivalinga was named as “Omkareshwara” and regular rituals were performed. The bars of the windows of the temple were made of “Panchaloha” and an alphabet “lim” has been placed in between the bars. Four minars have been built on four corners of the temple and the central minar is like a globe, which anybody can see.

Distance from Coorg 1 km.

Auto fare Rs. 10.

Courtesy: Dr. C. P. Ramasesh, Deputy Librarian, Mysore University Library.

Source: OurKarnataka.com

Must be an official source for publicity and promotion.

The description contains a small picture of the temple and surroundings.

Om : One God Universal

An effort should be made to get larger and better quality pictures. November 30, 2001.

Many efforts were made. All proved fruitless. 1/18/03. This is a heart-rending story with regard to most of the attempts made to find out more authentic further information. There is greed everywhere. Real love for scholarship has disappeared from most of India. I was borne and brought up in that generous country. The country of my birth was not so greedy earlier.



Inscriptions

Chance discovery of rare ancient records

It is really remarkable to realize here that one of the most valuable copper plates of great historical importance was found in a stone box near the temple of Siddhanātha as far back as 1905. (Siddheshwar, Siddhanātha and Siddhinātha are all identical.) The donees must have had a deep connection with this temple.

Another copper plate inscription of equal importance—rather of much greater importance-- related to the reign of Paramāra Jayasimha-Jayavarman II was accidentally found near the temple of Shri Kashi Vishvanath on the southern bank of the Narmadā river (South Mandhata) while cleaning the ground for a melā (fair).

How incidental, how accidental, and how fortuitous was the find of these valuable ancient records!

There might be many more such records buried underground!

No systematic, exhaustive and exploratory archaeological investigation has ever been undertaken on Mount Mandhata. We need another Sankalia (H. D.) and his associates of the Deccan College. I wrote to the heads of about one hundred institutions of higher learning and research in India, offering an award of a reward of as much as one hundred thousand rupees, if someone undertook some real search and research on OM and earned a Ph.D. Not even a single soul paid any attention to it! However, the offer still stands good.

With regard to the inscriptions related to Mandhata vis a vis the temples, Pasricha says:

“The only sources which throw meagre light on these temples are three huge copper plates which were discovered on them.¹⁵⁸ One of these plates dates back to 1055-56 A.D. and records the grant of nearby villages to the “Brāhmaṇas” of “Amareshvara Temple” on the south bank of the Narmadā by Jayasimhadeva

¹⁵⁸ We don't understand what the author wants to say. May-be, he himself does not know what he is talking about. We are presenting below the available details of all the inscriptions connected with Mandhata known to us so far. It is hoped that the reader will have a true, clear, and a better picture now. This incident calls for a scientific, systematic, exhaustive study of the Holy Land and its environs which is disparately needed.

(1055c.-1070 [?] A.D.) who was the successor of King Bhoja of Malwa. The other two, dating 1225 and 1260 A.D. found in the Siddheshvara temple [!]¹⁵⁹ mention the name of Devapāla (1218-39 A.D.) and Jayavarman (1255-74 A.D.). It is likely that the Parmārs, who ruled the whole of Malwa to which this place belonged between 9th and 13th centuries A.D. with their capital at Dhar, and who were devotees of Shiva, must have been associated with these temples in one way or the other.”

Ignorance is no bliss. We will call this **duḥsāhasa!** This is not a **śiṣṭācāra**. This is only an **atyācāra**. The above statement is vague, erroneous and misleading. The writer gave only his name to the writing. He did not give any time or attention to it. We call such writers as armchair researchers. We say this just to stress the point that there is a tremendous scope for search and research on Mandhata in order to find the truth. Many of the writings presented in this collection of ours suffer from this common disease. They are shallow. They have no depth. They are thoughtless, they are careless, they are senseless. They are written simply for the common people, the man in the street—**bhole bhāle rāha calate loga**.

ENG says on p. 471:

Four inscribed plates, respectively of Jayasimhdeva (A. D. 1055-60). Devapaladeva (C. 1218-32 A. D.) and Jayavarman II (C. 1255-75 A. D.) all the three Paramāra kings of Dhara of Malwa were found at Māndhātā¹⁶⁰ and they are referred to in Chapter II.

ENG gives further details of the inscriptions found at Mandhata, on pp. 47-48 of chapter II:

Of the several inscriptions found in the district Nīmār, the oldest was discovered at Māndhātā, being dated in 1055 A.D. It records the grant of a village to the Brahmanas of Amareshwara [note], a temple on the left bank of the Narmada at Mandhata, for food and other purposes by Jayasimhadeva (c. 1055-60 A.D.) successor of Bhoja.¹⁶¹

Two inscriptions of the reign of Devapaladeva (C. 1218-32) were found at Harsauda (modern Harsud) and Māndhātā. This Stone Inscription, dated in V.S. 1275 (A. D. 1218), records construction of a Śiva temple and a tank nearby by a

¹⁵⁹ Nonsense and rubbish.

¹⁶⁰ Various locations

¹⁶¹ *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. III, pp. 46 ff; Hiralal, *Inscriptions in the C.P. and Berar*, p.74.

merchant and states that Devapaladeva of Dhara was the then ruler.¹⁶² Another inscription dated in V.S. 1282 (A.D. 1225), with the name of the king was found near the Siddheśvara temple at Māndhātā. It records grant of a village Satajuṇā, still existing under the same name, 13 miles south-west of Māndhātā, to a number of Brāhmaṇas after the king had bathed in the Revā (Narmadā), while staying at Māhiṣmatī which, as discussed earlier, is equated with Māndhātā. Inscription records not only names of the donees but also name of father, grandfather, place of origin, gotra, śākhā, epithet, used by each one of them. The donees were connected with [hailing from] far flung places of the country, like Mathurā, Jodhpur, Tripuri, Akolā, the country between the Himalayas, etc.

The remaining two inscriptions, both of which are on copper plates and discovered at Māndhātā, refer themselves to the reign of Jaysiṃhadeva *alias* Jayavarman (C. 1255-75), described as lord of Dhārā. The first of these dated in V.S. 1317 (A.D. 1261), records the grant of a village Vadauda (the village Burud, 22 miles from Māndhātā) in Mahuada *pathak* (Mahod, 28 miles from Māndhātā), by Pratihāra Gāṅgeyadeva to three Brahmanas after bathing at the confluence of the Reva and the Kapila, near Amreśvara temple. This Charter was later ratified by Jayavarman while staying at Mandu.¹⁶³

The other one, dated in V.S. 1331 (A.D. 1274), is a charter issued by *Sādhanika* (a commander of the army), Anayasīṃhadeva, with the permission of the Paramara king Jayavarman, granting four villages to a number of Brāhmaṇas [numbering 14] residing in Brahmapurī (i.e. the Brāhmaṇa¹⁶⁴ settlement) at Māndhātā. **[To us this is the most important, significant, valuable, lovely, lovable and enchanting ancient record.]**

It is evident from these inscriptions that the north of East Nimar was under the sway of the Parmaras from the beginning of the ninth [?] to the last quarter of the thirteenth centuries.

¹⁶² *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XX, pp. 310-11; Journal, Asiatic Society of Bengal. Vol. XXVIII, pp. 1-8; *Inscriptions in the C.P. and Berar*, p. 77. .

¹⁶³ *Epigraphia Indica* Vol. IX, pp. 103ff.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid* Vol. XXXII, pp. 139ff.

Now we will present some data in brief and in chart form so that it appears as a hand mirror.

Chart # 1.

01 Date: 1112 V.S., 1055 A.D.

02 Donor: Jayasiṃhadeva (c. 1055-60 A.D.)

03 Donation, Nature of: Grant of a village, named Bhīma¹⁶⁵, which belonged to Maktula village (group of) forty-two in the Pūrṇapathaka maṇḍala, while residing at Dhārā.

04 Donee: Brahmanas of Paṭṭaśālā at holy Amareśvara temple.

“Śrī Amareśvare paṭṭaśālābrāhmaṇebyaḥ.”

05 Objective: For food and other purposes. **“bhojanādinimittam.”**

06 Located: Not known. Present whereabouts too unknown.

07 Medium: Copper plates.

08 Editor: Dr. F. Keilhorn and Trivedi (CII. 7.2 for all Trivedi.)

09 Source (Ref.): *East Nimar Gazetteer, Epigraphia Indica*, 3: 46 ff.

10 Additional remarks: The Inscription asserts that Jayasiṃhadeva succeeded Bhojadeva.

Trivedi says present whereabouts not known.

This is a very important inscription. It sets the end date of the reign of Bhojadeva. Strangely enough, the name of this king [Jayasiṃhadeva] does not appear in any subsequent records of the dynasty.

The donor king was stationed at his capital Dhārā at that time and yet he thought of donating the village to the Brahmanas connected with the Amaresh-vara Temple. The inscription itself says: *Dhārāvasthitair asmābhiḥ*. A.D. 1055 seems

¹⁶⁵ Trivedi says: The village Bhima appears to have been represented by the modern Bhīmpurā, a little distance east of Godarpur and on the Southern bank of Narmadā.

to be the first year of his rule. Generally such donations are given on special occasions, such as an eclipse, or a particular parvan, or a visit to a holy place of pilgrimage.

But our question is: Was the assumption of the rulership of such a vast kingdom, after suppressing the opposing forces and defeating the band of enemies, not a grand occasion to make this holy donation, even on a long distance basis, to the Brahmans connected with the *kuladevatā*, *iṣṭadevatā* of the kingdom? We believe it was a grand occasion to celebrate the grand victory and assumption of the leadership of such a vast and prestigious government.

The following information has been taken from Trivedi's book:

No. 18; Plate xx
Māndhātā Grant of Jayasimha
Vikrama Year 1112

This inscription is incised on two plates of copper which are said to have been found at or near Māndhātā, an island in the Narmadā in the East Nemād (Khaṇḍwā) District of Madhya Pradesh. The record has been edited before, from an inscription prepared by Cousens, Superintendent of the Archaeological Survey of Western India, by F. Keilhorn, in the *Epigraphia Indica*, Volume III (1894-95), pp. 46 ff, with text in Nāgari chracters (pp. 48-50) and facsimi ???

* * *

It is significant to recall here that Chálukya Vikramáditya VI, the hero of our *Vikramánkadevacarita Mahākāvya*, helped this Paramára Jayasimha to recover his kingdom. Mahákavi Bilhana has this to say:

स मालवेन्दुं शरणं प्रविष्टम् अकण्टके स्थापयति स्म राज्ये ।

And here is what I wrote about 60 years ago as a beginning young raw youth in my early twenties.

On second thought, I believe that I did not write it. Sarasvati Devi dictated it and Shri Ganesha wrote it. How could I write all this erudite matter at such a tender age! In reality, Mother Sarasvati dictated it and Shri Ganeshji wrote it.

Whatever may be the case, here is what was written;

मालवेशसाहाय्यदानमधिकृत्य श्रीमान् ओझामहोदयस्त्वेवमाह :-- [सो० प्रा० इ० प० ९३-९४ टिप्पणी च] “विक्रमादित्यो यस्मै मालवेशाय साहाय्यमददात् स परमारवंशोद्भवो जयसिंहः स्यात् यो हि भोजराजादनन्तरं धारासिंहासनमधिरुह । किन्तु तदात्वे तद्राज्यं शत्रुसेनापरिवेष्टितमासीत्, यां निराकर्तुं स नासीदलम् । ततश्च तद्बान्धव उदयादित्यस्तद्राज्यमपाहरत् । एवञ्च जयसिंहः स्वराज्यपुनःप्राप्तिलालसया कल्याणमगादिति संभाव्यते । किन्तु स उदयादित्यं निरस्य मालवराज्यपुनरासादनसमर्थोऽभवदिति नोपलभ्यते । यतो हि जयसिंहस्य ताम्रशासनम् १०५५ ई० वत्सरीयमुपलभ्यते, १०५९ ई० वत्सरे चोदयादित्यः शशासेति उदयपुरस्य (ग्वालियर) शिलालेखादधिगम्यते । एवञ्च प्रागुक्तवत्सरद्वयाभ्यन्तरे कदाचन साहाय्यमयाचत” इति ।

चिन्त्यमेतत् । श्रीमतो डी०सी० गाङ्गुलीमहोदयस्य ‘परमारवंशेतिहासः’ विषयमेतं विशदयन् श्रीमत ओझामहोदयस्य मतासङ्गतिं बिल्हणोक्त्याथार्थ्यं च प्रमाणीकरोति । [H.P.D. pp. 123 -124, D.H.N.1. P.873ff.]. तथा च तत्रेदमस्ति निरूपितम् :--

कलचुरिकर्ण-चालुक्यभीम (प्रथम)- समवेतबले भोजदेवबले च युध्यमाने एव भोजोऽसाध्यरोगग्रस्तः सन् पञ्चत्वमञ्चति स्म । तदा तदुत्तराधिकारी जयसिंहः आहवमल्लं साहाय्यमयाचत । आहवमल्लो विक्रमाय कार्येऽस्मिन् न्ययुङ्क्त । विक्रमसाहाय्येन स भूयोऽपि निजराज्यमाससाद । स किलानेकवर्षाणि शास्ति स्म, परं तस्य राज्यान्तकालो न निश्चीयते ।

सोमेश्वरः (द्वितीयः) १०६८ वर्षे राज्यमलभत । स खलु भीमोत्तराधिकारिणा कर्णेन (१०६३-१०९४ ई.) संगत्य जयसिंहराजधानीमाचक्राम । तस्मिंश्च तुमुले युद्धे जयसिंहः प्राणानत्याक्षीत् । तस्मिन्नुपरते तदरातिषु च नाचिराय धारामधिकृतवत्स्वपि जयसिंहक्रमानुयायिना उदयादित्येन शाकंभरीपतिचाहमानवंशोद्भवदुर्लभ (तृतीय)नृपति-साहाय्येन निरस्तास्ते शत्रवः, धारा च भूयोऽपि परमार वंशजैरध्यकारि । [H.P.D. pp. 127-136]. ।

श्रीमता ओझामहोदयेन यः शिलालेखः प्रमाणत्वेनोपन्यस्तः स वस्तुतः १५१३ ई० वर्षीयो नितान्तं खण्डितश्चास्ति । उदयादित्यः १०५९ ई० वत्सरे उदयपुरमन्दिरं निर्ममे इति तत्रास्ति नूनं लिखितम्, परं स तदा साधारणनृपतिरूपेणोदयपुराच्छासनमकार्षीन् पुनर्धाराधीशतयेति निश्चितम् । [H.P.D. p. 130 note 2]

प्राच्यचालुक्यवंशजे राजराजे (वेङ्गिदेशाधिपतौ) १०६२ ई० वर्षे दिवमुपगते
विक्रमस्तद्राज्यमभिययौ । तदा जयसिंहो धाराधीशतया विक्रमपक्षमवालम्बत ।[H.P.D. pp.
125-127; I.H.Q. XIII pp. 87-88]

सोमेध्वरश्च (द्वितीयः) गुर्जरराजकर्णेन संगत्य जयसिंहमाक्रान्तवान् ।[H.P.D. pp. 125-
127] कर्णश्च प्रायशः १०६३ ई. वत्सरे राज्यसिंहासनमारुरोह ।

प्रमाणैरमीभिरिदं निःसंशयं प्रमाणीभवति यज्जयसिंहः १०७० ई० वर्षे यावच्छास्ति स्म,
उदयादित्यस्य च १०५९ ई० वत्सरे धाराधीशत्वं सर्वथैवासंभाव्यमिति ।



Chart # 2

01 Date: 1282 V. S., 1130 A.D.

02 Donor: King Devapāladeva.

03 Donation, Nature of: Grant of the village named Satājuṇā.

04 Donee: 32 Brāhmaṇas hailing from various places.

05 Objective: Not stated specifically.

06 Located: In 1905 near the Temple of Siddheśvara at Mandhata.

07 Medium: Copper plates.

08 Editors: Dr. F. Keilhorn and H. V. Tivedi.

09 Source (Ref.): *Epigraphia Indica*, 9:103 ff.

10 Additional remarks: Trivedi's no. 51, pp. 175 ff. In fn. no. 1 on page 176 Trivedi says: Long. 76° 9' E.; Lat. 22° 15 N. For the description of the temple, see *A.S.I., A.R.*, 1903-04, p. 57.

He says: In my visit to the place I learnt from some old persons there that the plates were found in the vicinity of the Amareśvara temple there. [How reliable and authentic would this be regarded.]

According to Trivedi, Satājuṇā appears to be the modern village of the same name, situated about 20 kms. South-west of Māndhātā in Long. 76° 3' and Lat. 22° 8'.

On p. 182 Trivedi presents the text of the grant. The following are some significant statements in the original: माहिष्मतीस्थितैरस्माभिः ... रेवायां स्नात्वा श्रीदैत्यसूदनसन्निधौ भगवन्तं भवानीपतिं समभ्यर्च्य ...

And in fn. 7 he says: This appears to refer to the image of Viṣṇu installed in an old temple in the vicinity of the well-known temple at Mandhata.

It is to be remembered here that according to Sankalia and company Māhiṣmatī and Māndhātā are not identical.¹⁶⁶ They are about 38 miles apart. Did the king stay at Māhiṣmatī and take bath and donate the village after taking bath at Māndhātā? All this is not clear to us. This subject needs further exploration.



¹⁶⁶ On the other hand, some scholars argue that both are identical.

Chart # 3

01 Date: 1317 V.S., 1260 A.D.

02 Donor: King Jayavarman II.

03 Donation, Nature of: Grants a village named Vadauda.

04 Donee: Learned and pious Brāhmaṇas.

05 Objective: Establishment provided for by the king's favour.

06 Located: In 1904 at the village Godarpura.

07 Medium: Copper plates.

08 Editor: F. Keilhorn and Trivedi.

09 Source (Ref.): *Epigraphia Indica*, 9 : 117 ff.

10 Additional Remarks: Donated by Pratīhāra Gāṅgeyadeva, after bathing at the confluence of Revā & Kapilā rivers and worshiping Śiva at the Amareśvara Temple; ratified by the king while staying at Maṇḍapadurga.

Chart # 4

01: Date: 1331 V.S., 1274 A.D.

02 Donor: Sādhanaika Anayasimhadeva.

03 Donation, Nature of: Donates four villages.

04 Donee: Fourteen Brāhmaṇas [14, 15 or 16 ?]¹⁶⁷ residing in Brahma-purī, i.e. Brāhmaṇa settlement at Māndhātṛidurga.

05 Objective:

06 Located: Discovered in 1927 at Mandhata, on the Southern bank of Narmada, when some people were cleaning the ground near the Kaśī Viśva-nātha Temple for the Kārtikī melā.

07 Medium: Copper plates.

08 Editor: D. C. Sircar and H. V. Trivedi.

09 Source (ref): *Epigraphia Indica*, 32: 139 ff.

10 Additional remarks: The ruling king ratifies the grant made by Sādhanika Anayasimhadeva.

Valuable verses from this Inscription appear as the **Maṅgalācaraṇa** of this Holy Source Book--Omkāra Māndhātā--A Paradise for Pilgrims.

Here are some vital quotes:

The next six verses (61-66) describe the benefactions of Anayasimha at different places. He constructed a temple of Śiva at Devapālapura; another, which was lofty and dedicated to Ambikā, at Śākapura, and still another, of Śiva (locally

¹⁶⁷ The number 16 is very significant. Sixteen temples were constructed and dedicated. There are 16 kalās in Moon. Pūrṇa Avatāra is regarded as constituting 16 kalās. The full worship is called ṣoḍaśopacāra pūjā. A lady fully ornamented is called having ṣoḍaśa śrīṅgāra. Originally the idea was to donate the villages to 16 Brāhmāṇas, but the total number fell short by one or two. Probably the intention of the donor was to find the additional Brāhmaṇas and make the total number of 16, and it was only a temporary expedient measure to keep the balance in the possession of the donor for final disposal.

known as Jambūkeśvara) near that of Omkāreśvara¹⁶⁸ Māndhātā. He excavated a tank at Maṇḍapa-durga, and at the same place he donated a city, a Brahmapurī, with the permission of his master, to Brāhmaṇas--a city furnished with the surrounding wall (rampart) and street (*prākāra* and *pratolī*), sixteen temples surmounted with jars of gold, and containing several apartments, a guest-house, one temple for gods (*guru-sura-sadana*)[?] and a stepped well. (v. 66) (Ref. Trivedi).

The above passage is not clear to us at all. Where is the translation of the words most important to us: **Māndhātṛdurge'pyanupamaracanām tadvad eva vyadhata** ? It seems the translator has proved once again the validity of an age-old adage—To err is human. But it was a real heart-burn to us. Very sad; very bad.

Here is the original in transliterated form:

Tasmād Anayasimho'bhūd Kalāvān iva vāridheḥ.

Ya ekaḥ kalpavṛkṣādi-madhye gaṇanayānvitaḥ. //61//

Devapālapure yena prāsāde kārīte Śivaḥ.

Śrāntaḥ kuṇḍajalavyājāt Siddhasindhum dadhau puraḥ. //62//

Śākapure'bhraṃlihaśikharam¹⁶⁹ surasadanam Ambikā'dhigatam.

Yo'cīkarad iva dātum viśrāntim khe dvijasya sambhramataḥ. //63//

Omkāraprāsādam samayā niramāpayattarām tuṅgam¹⁷⁰.

Jambūkeśvaranāmnāḥ Śambhor yaḥ sadanam anupam iti.¹⁷¹ //64//

Yatkārīte sarasi Maṇḍapadurgamadhye

Kumbhodbhavaḥ pratiniśam pratibimbyamānaḥ.

Jyotirmayo lavaṇavāridhivāripāna-

¹⁶⁸ Trivedi says: This temple is not in existence now. Some deep archaeological excavation—search and research is needed. According to Omkareshvara Darshanika, there is a Shivalinga named as Jhumkeshvara Mahādeva. It does not give any more details. But we have found much more there near this Shivalinga. Discussed in detail a little later.

¹⁶⁹ The editor (D. C. Sircar) recommends to read Śākapurākhya. To us it seems a hasty judgment. It will make the word only a viśeṣaṇa, the qualifier. Where is the viśeṣya, the qualified substantive?

There are various variations of the metre Āryā.

Trivedi makes it śikharm, and correctly too.

¹⁷⁰ N.B.

¹⁷¹ N.B.

duḥsvādaduḥkham iva mārṣṭi pibannapo'ntaḥ. //65//

Prākāreṇa pratolyā ṣaḍadhikadaśabhir mandiraiḥ svarṇakumbhair

uttuṅgair bhūrikakṣair gurusurasadanenāmbukuṇḍena yuktām.

Yo durge Maṇḍapākhye vyatarad iha purīm Brāhmaṇebhyo nṛpājñām

labdhvā Māndhātṛdurge'pyanupamaracanām tadvad eva vyadhata //66//

अत्रास्ति मूलम् ।

तस्मादनयसिंहोऽभूत्कलावानिव वारिधेः ।

य एकः कल्पवृक्षादिमध्ये गणनयाऽन्वितः ॥६१॥

देवपालपुरे येन प्रासादे कारिते शिवः ॥

श्रान्तः कुण्डजलव्याजात् सिद्धसिन्धुं दधौ पुरः ॥ ६२ ॥

शाकपुरेऽभ्रलिहशिखरं सुरसदनमम्बिकाऽधिगतम् ।

योऽचीकरदिव दातुं विश्रान्तिं खे द्विजस्य संभ्रमतः ॥ ६३ ॥

ओंकारप्रासादं समया निरमापयत्तरां तुङ्गम्

जम्बूकेश्वरनाम्नः शम्भोर्यः सदनमनुपममिति ॥ ६४ ॥

यत्कारिते सरसि मण्डपदुर्गमध्ये कुम्भोद्भवः प्रतिनिशं प्रतिबिम्ब्यमानः ।

ज्योतिर्मयो लवणवारिधिवारिपान-दुःस्वाददुःखमिव मार्ष्टि पिवन्नपोऽन्तः ॥६५॥

प्राकारेण प्रतोल्या षडधिकदशभिर्मन्दिरैः स्वर्णकुम्भैः

उत्तुङ्गैर्भूरिकक्षैर्गुरुसुरसदनेनाम्बुकुण्डेन युक्ताम् ॥

यो दुर्गे मण्डपाख्ये व्यतरदिह पुरीं ब्राह्मणेभ्यो नृपाज्ञाम्

लब्ध्वा मान्धातृदुर्गेऽप्यनुपमरचनां तद्वदेव व्यधत् ॥६६॥

Very important information secured through the kind courtesy of Dr. Mrs. Malati Mahajan of Nagpur. For the first time I learnt, and in the clearest possible terms, who constructed what on the Mount Mandhata. I have had this very inscription with me all along for a long time--and I had used it too, but I had not

paid any attention to this particular part, which is way below what I had read. In fact this inscription is the most valuable, dear and near to our heart, because it has provided us also with the **maṅgālacaraṇa** for our Sourcebook—the first writing of this nature on Omkara Mandhata in the history of India's glorious past.

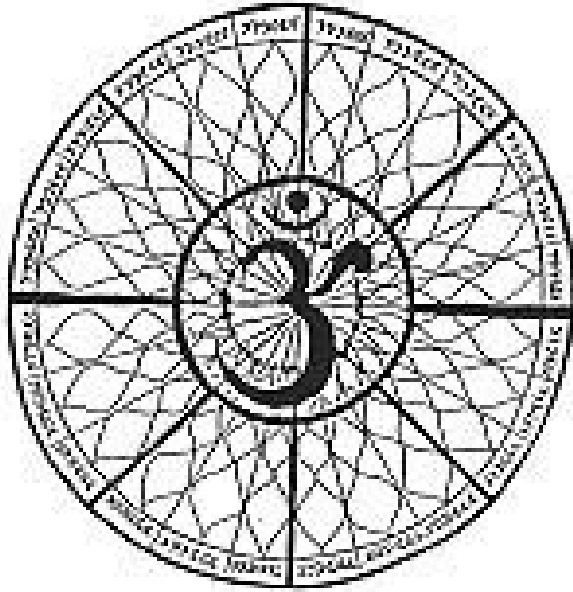


Chart # 5

01 Date: V.S. 1272; A.D. 1215.

02 Donor: King Arjunadevavarman.

03 Donation, Nature of: भूमिरियम् This land.

04 Donee: The family priest named Govinda Sharmá.
पुरोहितपण्डितगोविन्दशर्मणे ब्राह्मणाय

05 Objective: He was the family priest.

06 Located: Not known.

07 Medium: Copper plates.

08 Editor: Fitz-Edward Hall.

09 Source (ref): Journal of the American Oriental Society, VII ?

10 Additional remarks:

The editor begins with the following remarks to head:

Two inscriptions Pertaining to the Paramāra Rulers of Mālava :

The Sanskrit with Translations and Remarks

By Fitz-Edward Hall, D.C.L. Presented to Society, October 17, 1860¹⁷²

Here are some significant choice statements:

सोमवतीतीर्थे स्नात्वा--¹⁷³

श्रीमदर्जुनवर्मदेवेन--

महाकालपुरमध्ये--

¹⁷² Ref. Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 7 No. ? Pp. ?

¹⁷³ These remarks relate to the second inscription.

श्रीभृगुकच्छसमावासितैरस्माभिः--
सप्तत्यधिकद्वादशशतसंवत्सरे --

पगाराप्रतिजागरणके नर्मदोत्तरकूले हथिणावरग्रामे--

श्रीमदमरेश्वरतीर्थावस्थितैरस्माभिः
द्विसप्तत्यधिकद्वादशशतसंवत्सरे
रेवाकपिलयोः सङ्गमे स्नात्वा भगवन्तं भवानीपतिमोकारं लक्ष्मीपतिं चक्रस्वामिनं
चाऽभ्यर्च्य
पुरोहितपण्डितगोविन्दशर्मणे ब्राह्मणाय भूमिरियं परया भक्त्या शासनेनोदकपूर्वं प्रदत्ता
संवत् १२७२--
स्वहस्तो'यं
महाराजश्रीअर्जुनवर्मदेवस्य ।

रचितमिदं महासान्धि०पं० श्री बिल्हणसम्मतेन--

स्वहस्तो ऽयं महाराजश्रीमदर्जुनवर्मदेवस्य ।
[1215 A. D.]

Sojourning at the holy station of the blessed Amareshwara,
After bathing at the junction of the Revā and Kapilā,
In the year twelve hundred and seventy-two,
And after worshipping the adorable lord of Bhavānī,¹⁷⁴ Omkāra,¹⁷⁵ the
consort of Lakshmī and the master of the discus;

In a note related to Amareshvara [his # 30], editor Hall says:

This place has not been identified, any more than several others specified in this inscription and in that which follows. The phallus of Amareshwara lies to the west of Mount Paryanka, according to the 26th chapter of the Revā-māhātmya. Mount Paryanka is son of Vindhya, in mythology. [This information must have been taken by the editor from his Puranic source. Not clear to us at all. All this is vague, not worthy of a scholar of the outstanding standing of Fitz-Edward Hall. There are no references. No authentication. No verifiable statement. Very sad. Very

¹⁷⁴ This is Śiva.

¹⁷⁵ In the original, the *anuswāra* is wanting over the last syllable of this word. Onkāra, 'the syllable Om', is, among the S'aivas, the sensible type of S'iva ; among the Vaishnava or Vishṇu.[?]

bad. This makes us mad. Most of the discussion presented here by the editor is only **viṭaṇḍāvāda**]

With reference to the confluence of Revā and Kapilā, Editor Hall says in a note [his no. 31]:

This junction is east [?] of the Vaidūrya mountain, in Dharmāraṇya at Siddhimanvantara. [This information possibly relates to Omkāradvīpagiri, our Omkāra Māndhātā Island hill.] It lies to the north of the Revā or Narmadā. [Extremely important to note.] The Kapilā takes its rise in the highlands of Khandesh, and disembogues opposite the temple of Omkāra-Māndhātā, a little to the east of the "Churar." [?] It arose from the water used at a sacrifice performed by King Vasudāna.¹⁷⁶ Great is the merit of dying at the confluence of the Revā and Kapilā. Again

रेवातटेषु ये वृक्षाः पतिताः कालपर्यये ।
नर्मदातोयसंस्पृष्टास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥

That is to say, so efficacious is the holiness of this Narmadā, at all points throughout its length, that the very trees sprinkled by its spray are pronounced to be secure of future beatitude. *Revā-māhātmya*, chpters 1-15, et alibi).

* * *

This royal deed of the Paramara King Arjunadevavarman is very significant in relation to the position and status of the holy shrine of Amareshvara and its environs. We may visualize a royal residence, a palace there where the Royal Ruler and his entourage would sojourn when the king would visit the holy place and spend some time there worshipping his Isṭadeva and donating riches and land to the Brāhmaṇas.

As an aside we might point out that the writer of the deed was not an ordinary "pen-holder" but a composer of great merit. He demonstrates his poetic power in the very first verse. There is a worthy pun here. The land donated was to a Brahmana, a dvija. Now the Moon too is a dvija. The composer did not indulge in the **lokapracalita kathā of Uparāgo graho rahu-graste tvindau ca pūṣaṇi**—Rāhu devouring the moon--but he brings the scientific nature and state of the lunar eclipse—the shadow of the earth falling on the planet.

This donation deed of Arjunadevavarman tells us that he worshipped both Bhagavān Bhavānīpati Omkāra and Lakshmīpati Cakradhārin Mahāvishṇu.

¹⁷⁶ Not very clear to us at all. The writer wrote for himself in his own cryptic language.

Now Maheśvara and Māndhātā-Dvīpa-Giri were both primarily Śaiva Dharma-kṣetras or Puṇyatīrthas. May be these kings of Paramāra Kula had attained a higher state of religious belief where the teaching was

Śivasya hṛdayam Viṣṇur Viṣṇoś ca hṛdayam Śivah.

Or, maybe, the fact was that being the kings of the people and the popular rulers of the land, these royal heads had to care for the people of all sects, faiths and beliefs. Internally, they might have had preference for Shiva, but they had also to think of the people who were devoted to Vishnu.

No doubt Viṣṇu images and temples dedicated to Him have been found on the Mount Māndhātā as well as on the southern bank of the Narmadā where one area is called Viṣṇupurī.

It is significant also to remember here that the image of Garuḍa was engraved on the inscriptions of the Paramāra kings. It was a kind of royal emblem. Now Garuḍa is not a Shaiva symbol!

The following is drawn from the section “Pratihāra and Paramāra Dynasties,” pp. 219 ff. of Malati Mahajan: *Madhya Pradesh*....

This is one more durga of the period of Jayasimha Jayavarman II known from the same Māndhātā pls. as above. The grant records both these forts were provided with fortification wall, royal roads,¹⁷⁷ assembly halls, and tanks in front of the temples. It has been identified..... an island in Narmadā. It appears to be the Jaladurga as described by *Kautilya*. There were two types of jaladurga viz., (1) Fort on island (2) fort surrounded by water.¹⁷⁸ *Kautilya* tells us about the construction of forts as well as the duty established in the inner side of the fort.

¹⁷⁷ Nonsense and rubbish! The original has **pratoli**, which means a watch tower.

¹⁷⁸ The footnote does not appear here since the book is not here with us now. To be seen by one who follows us.

Coins

Coins honoring OMkāra. Source: K. V. Ramakrishna Rao, *Om in epigraphy and numismatics*, VKP, p. 191 ff. [This matter needs further research].

[The following document was widely circulated among the major museums in India. Only one replied -- Victoria Memorial, Calcutta : even that was negative. Most of the addressees didn't care at all. They were not interested in OM. Sarvāḥ svārtham samīhate. This project has been a very sad experience for me, all of it. It was a bitter-sweet experience. Most of our appeals for help fell on deaf ears. It was truly crying in the wilderness. **Araṇyaruditam kṛtam....**]

Fig. 9: Perhaps, this figure solves the riddle of symbolism, as here a female figure clearly stands before the symbol with folded hands, proving that it must be a deity. The six or seven stones may represent Goddesses and the taurine symbol 'bull.' This combination again gives the picture of a temple. As only the female figure is represented, the God represented by the symbol may be the God of procreation or OMkāramūrti. [N.B.] The entire old world considered this mystic symbol as the union of the male and the female signifying creation. The Tantric interpretation of OM is that it is capable of freeing the Jiva or soul from the bondage of birth and death. **There are coins available with the name Sri Somaladevī supposed to be the wife of Śakambharī king Ajayadeva, found in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh belonging to the post-Gupta period. On the reverse of the coins the expression 'Śrī OM' or 'Śrī OMkāra' is found very clearly. It is said that the coins were issued in the name of a God 'Omkaṛa Mantata' [i.e. Māndhātā, a copy-cat performance. Makshikā-sthāne makshikā]. There is a magnificent temple built in the name of this God at Mantata near Indore. (Note). People believe that childless couples who worship the deity would bear a child. (Emphasis added).**

In reference to the coins dedicated to OMkāra, D. C. Ganguly says in "The Chahamanas," *History and culture of the Indian people*, Vol. 5, "The Struggle for Empire," p. 82: [But very little]

"The Chāhamānas of Śākambharī. Ajayarāja (elsewhere Ajayadeva), Son and Successor of Prthvīrāja...founded the city of Ajayameru, modern Ajmer. **Silver and copper coins of his reign have been found, some of which bear the names of his queen Somaladevī.** He was succeeded by his son Arṇorāja, also known as Ānaka and Ānalladeva, before 1133. [But Ganguly does not say that these coins were dedicated to OMkāra, or that they were issued in the holy name of God OMkāra.]

See Ganguly's *History of the Paramara dynasty. Yet to be seen.*
[A note for me]

Nagpur Univ. Librarian had given us a reference to Indo-Sassanian coins—with legend Śrī Omkāra—*Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, vol. 11 [II?], p. 58 . We have been trying for a long time to get photocopies of these coins, but without any success. This has been a serious drawback in our search for research data. Our bibliographical resources are extremely limited here in Columbia, Missouri.

Indo-Sassanian

Sassan, grandfather of Ardashir I fl. A.D. 226, who founded the Sassanid dynasty of, relating to, or having the characteristics of Sassanid dynasty of ancient Persia and especially of the art forms or architecture developed during the period of the dynasty.

We have been in correspondence, for a very long time, with the Asiatic Society of Bombay, which has some coins inscribed with Om. The matter is pending at their end. Apparently, they don't want to promote what they have collected and preserved! All this is trying our patience to its limits.

Source for the above:

Bhagawanlal Indraji, "Gadhia coins of Gujarāt and Mālhwā," *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 12:325-28.

This is an important source.

The author says at the end: "In the Mālhwā coins of a late period [!] there are sometimes letters like modern Nāgarī characters in the centre of the altar. In no. 14 there appears the well-known syllable *om*, in no. 18 there is a corrupt form of the same, or śrī. In no. 19 is śrī omkar [!], which has some reference to the well-known Mahādeva on the banks of the Narmada near Indore."

Twenty sets of coins (obverse and reverse) have been reproduced on a plate, but they are all not at all distinct, especially those we are interested in or which are of great interest to us.

The paper was read October 14th 1876. The coins reproduced in the plate are from the Society's cabinet.

* * *

Coins issued in honor of [the name of] Omkareshvara at Mandhata.

Some additional notes:

Search: Somaladevī, queen of Shākambharī King Ajayadeva.

Think of Shākambharī, Cāhamāna.

Brūte samprati Cāhamānatilakaḥ Śākambharībhūpatiḥ
Śrīmadvīsaladeva eṣa vijayī santānajan ātmanaḥ.

Asmābhiḥ karadam vyadhāyi Himavadvindhyāntarālam bhuvāḥ
Śeṣasvīkaraṇāya mā'stu bhavatām udyogaśunyam manaḥ.

(Drawn from memory. Yet to be verified. Delhi Siwalik stambha lekha?)

The book by Birla, on the above king (Vīsaladeva) is only a fiction.
Appendix has an extract from Tod's [?] *Annals of Rajputana*, not worth reading for our current work.



OMKARESHWAR

(Source Darshanikā)



[Quite a good deal has been written with regard to the holy heritage, home of pilgrimage, famed as Omkārajī, Omkāreshwar, or Omkāra Māndhātā. But at least some of it is a bad deal any way, since it is only a copycat performance. Some writings are merely childish—only a baby talk. Some others are bristling with bundles of horrible blunders. Here is something more authentic, responsible, and reliable.]

Omkareshwar, also known as ‘Mandhata Omkareshwar’ is one of the 12 Jyotirlingas, that is, luminous physical self-appearances of Lord Shiva Shankara Mahadeva. It is situated on the bank of the holy river Narmada in Khandwa district of Madhya Pradesh, 12 kilometers from Mortakka or Omkareshwar Road railway station and 77 kms. each from Indore and Khandwa on the opposite sides [north and south].

The main part of the town, containing the famous Jyotirlinga Omkareshwara Temple, is situated on the southern [!] bank of the river [Narmadā]. In ancient times the village was situated primarily on the island hill itself [at a higher level] and it was then a considerable township, the remains of which are still extant. Later on the habitation shifted downward touching the bank of Narmadā, and dwindled to about 600. It gradually increased to 1350 by 1970 and about 6000 by 1995. It is

still increasing owing to the tourist facilities and the construction of a Cantilever bridge in 1979 across the Narmadā in the midst of the town. Till 1950 the place had only a Police Station and a Primary School. Now it has a High School, Civil Dispensary, Bank, Telephone Exchange, Irrigational Subdivisional Headquarters and a Nagar Panchayat.

Puranic History and Legends

Raja Mandhata of Ikshāku lineage and an ancestor of Bhagavan Shri Ramacandra performed penances here. His throne is still there in the Omkareshvara Temple complex. According to a legend it was his austere penance that the God Shankara made his habitation as Omkara at the site of Omkareshvara Temple.

According to the Shiva Purana, the great deva-muni Nārada, popularly known as the first Sañcāra Mantrī of the world, once visited Vindhyācala (mountain). It is situated all along the northern bank of the great river Narmada, Satpura mountain being in the south. Vindhyācala perceived the disgruntled mood of Narada muni and enquired what sort of shortcoming occurred in his reception. He was told that there was no habitation of Gods on him as on Kailāsa and Sumeru mountains. On this Vindhyacala performed rigorous penance and pleased Lord Shiva who blessed Vindhyacala by making his permanent residence at Omkareshvara. Shivapurana presents similar narrations how Lord Shiva made His residence and habitation on the rest of the 11 jyotirlingas by the penances of other devotees.

Unique Scenic Beauty of Omkareshwar

The Mandhata part of the village is situated on the Island which is roughly 4 kms. long and 2 kms. wide. According to a legend Kāverī, a local river (22 miles long) came from the south to meet holy Narmada (815 long) [850 ?] but Narmada did not treat her well so in her wrath Kaveri crosses the Narmada unmixed with its water carrying away not only its flow but also its name to the north of Narmada. When cajoled by Narmada, Kaveri merged in Narmada forming its second and final confluence. [She had no choice!]

The island is about 450 to 500 feet above the encircled waters and is called “Vaidūrya Maṇi Parvata” in the Puranas. The stream to the north of the south [mountain?] i.e. Narmada is deeper but narrower, so during the rains the higher the flood levels the greater is the discharge through the Kaveri stream.

The island comprises two lofty hills and is divided by a valley in such a way that it appears in the shape of Om (ॐ) from above.¹⁷⁹ Between the precipitous hills of the Vindhya on the north and the Satpura on the south, the Narmada forms a deep silent pool which in former times was full of alligators and fish, so tame as to take grain easily from the human hand. The pool is 270 feet below the cantilever type bridge constructed in 1979. The bridge, an engineering feat, has enhanced the scenic beauty of the place and has altered the geography of the markets [?] tremendously. The entire appearance of the place is exceedingly picturesque.

The row of houses, temples, Dharmashalas, and shops standing on the terraces scrapped out of the hills, conspicuous amongst them being the King's palace and the Omkareshwar temple—all adorning the picture. The narrow stone-paved lanes ascending the steps, together with myriad hues houses give a feeling of a continental seaside town. There are many shops for the sale of Idols, Religious books, Photos, Coconuts and other requisites of worship. The town is also called 'Omkārijī.' Omkar is derived from 'Om' which is recited by Hindus with great sanctity before the beginning of all the prayers. The town is divided into three parts, (1) Shivapuri or Shiva's town [the island], (2) Brahmapuri with Brahma's temple on the south bank, and (3) Vishnupuri with Vishnu's temple [also on the south bank.] In between the last two, there exists a ravine through which a stream called Kapiladhārā flows through Gomukhī or Cow's mouth.



In the medieval period, Mandhata Omkareshwar was ruled by the ab-original Bhila chieftains under the suzerainty of the Paramāra Kingdom of Dhār, the Sultans of Malwa, and the Scindias of Gwalior, who in turn handed it over to the British in 1824. [What about the early period, before the Paramaras?]

¹⁷⁹ Only a fairy tale so far.

The last Bhil chieftain Nathu Bhil fell out with Daryao Gosain, a powerful priest of the place. The latter approached the king of Jaipur to set Nathu Bhil right. The king sent his brother Bhārata Singha Chauhāna, the then Subedar of Jhalrapatan on the border of Malwa. Finally the entire tussle ended with the marriage of Bharata Singha and the only daughter of Nathu Bhil. Bharata Singha along with some other Rajput associates, who also married other Bhil girls, settled in Mandhata in 1165 A.D. The progeny is called Bhilālās. Bharata Singha's descendants ruled Omkareshwar since then. During the British rule the Rajas (officially known as Raos) had Mandhata Omkareshwar as their Jagir rights, all abolished now. Bharata Singha's direct descendants are called Rajputs.

Temples on the Northern Bank
(Island side)¹⁸⁰

Omkareshwar temple is the main attraction of the pilgrims. In fact the town owes its very existence to this temple. As to who constructed the temple and when it is all shrouded in mystery.¹⁸¹ The sanctum sanctorum containing the Jyotirlinga seems to have been originally a small temple of the old construction style, the dome being made of layers of stone slabs and not of circular cut stones.



As this temple is too close to the precipitously deep bank of the Narmada to the South, the great extension is of new construction style¹⁸². This is the reason

¹⁸⁰ We will call this North Mandhata, as opposed to the South Mandhata, which is also called Godarpur.

¹⁸¹ What effort, if any, has been made to unravel the mystery. All tall talk.

¹⁸² Does not make much sense.

Om : One God Universal

why the sanctum sanctorum and the main deity are neither in the front of the main door, nor below the higher conspicuous Shikhara or the tower of later construction.



The temple has a grand Sabhā Maṇḍapa (meeting or prayer hall) standing on about 60 huge brown stone pillars (14 feet high), elaborately carved with a curious frieze and fillet of satyrlike figures. Many of them have broad shoulders and meditating foreheads. The temple is five storeyed each having a different deity. There are three regular ‘Pujas’ in the temple. The morning one is done by the Temple Trust, the middle one by the priest of Scindia State, and the evening one by the priest of the Holkar State [imp. to note].



The temple is always crowded with pilgrims, coming after a bath in the Narmada and with pots full of Narmada water, coconuts and articles of worship, many of them performing Abhisheka or special worship through the priests. During fair or ‘Parva’ times it is very difficult to control the crowds in the temple. On every Monday the gold-plated, three-headed idol of Lord Omkara is taken on a palanquin with bands, drums, priests and devotees gathered in procession. First they go to the river where worship is done and then through the streets of the town.

In the month of holy Shrāvaṇa, the processions called ‘Somavāra Savārīs’ are huge and grand, the crowds dancing, uttering the Lord’s name ‘Om Shambhu Bhole Nātha,’ and throwing gulāla, making the atmosphere red.

The temple has been visited by VIP’s, including Rajas, Maharajas, Governors and Viceroy. Lord Curzon visited it in turn of the century [Oct. 31, 1902] and declared certain temples and structures as protected ancient monuments. Later on, Lord Reading visited it and presented a big ornamental brass lamp with an inscription in Sanskrit praying for peace (shānti) of the departed souls of those warriors who lost their lives fighting the first Great War. The last was Rashtrapati R. Venkata Raman to visit Omkareshwar in 1989.

Omkareshwar temple was declared a public trust in 1959 under the M. P. Public Trusts Act 1951, and a scheme of management was introduced in 1967 under Section 27 of the M. P. Public Trusts Act, with seven trustees, including the Rao of Mandhata (as Managing Trustee) and his nominee, two nominees of the Collector Khandwa, three representatives each one of the Zila Panchayat Khandwa, Block Panchayat Punasa and of the Nagar Panchayat Omkareshwar. The present Managing Trustee is Rao Devendra Singh of the Rao family.

The annual income of the trust is around Rs. 35 lakhs and apart from maintenance and worship of the temple, the trust contributes in many works of public interest in the town.



Other Temples on the Circum-
Rotation Route of the Island:

1. Rnamukteśvara Temple (Picture 4)



This is situated at the second or the final confluence of Narmada and Kaveri. As the name indicates, a pilgrim who offers gram pulse here is absolved of all the debts unpaid in his present or previous births.

2. Gaurī Somanātha Temple (Picture 6)



This is a big star-shaped temple, containing a gigantic six feet tall Shivalinga, around which, as the legend goes, two grown up persons embracing it cannot meet their hands unless they are related as maternal uncle and nephew (māmā bhāñjā). The lingam though very old is of a smooth black stone with shining polish. There is a sitting Nandi (Sacred Bull) of similar stone outside. As per legend, if anyone looked into it, he would see the figure of his next birth. Emperor Aurangzeb, the devout son of Islam and arch-iconoclast, while marching to the

south, on his way near-by Omkareshwar, heard of the rich temples and monuments therein. So he could not resist the temptation of coming to a spot so full of spoils. He did come and did spoil by mutilating the figures as is evident even now. Curious to test the legend, he stood before the Liṅgam and on gazing into it, he saw a pig in it. In his rage he burnt the Liṅgam, and since then it has assumed its present jet black hue and the properties have been lost. Col. James Tod in his 'Annals and antiquities of Rajasthan,' written about two centuries back, makes a mention of Aurangzeb's visit to Omkareshwar, but with a different version, saying that the emperor broke the idol, out of which blood gushed out. [I saw the book. I could not find anything substantial. A deeper and more extended search through the book is needed]

2. Chand Suraj Gate (Picture 5)



It is a protected ancient monument of red-yellow stone. The gate has very fine carvings as if done on wood.

3. Siddhanātha Temple (Picture 7)



This is one of the most inspiring temples from architectural point of view, which has been declared a protected ancient monument by Lord Curzon. It is on a plateau on the island hill supported by a huge plinth whose four sides are carved with about 50 elephants in various positions of relief. They are about five feet high, executed with singular correctness and excellence of attitude, in play-ful mood with deficient trunks, with a mahāwat on and a victim being crushed under foot. Two of them [the best ones] are removed and kept in the Nagpur Museum [guarding its entrance]. The rest are mutilated. The central shrine had an entrance on all the four sides with magnificent porches or Sabhā Maṇḍapas. All the four, each containing 18 stone pillars 14' high to the architrave, have marvelously carved satyrlike figures. When complete, the temple must have been an imposing structure with a cluster of five shikharas, four on the porches and the fifth standing above them on the temple itself.

Ashapuri Temple (Picture 8)

This is an old renovated temple containing the family deity of the tribals and the Rao family. Regular Pūjā is performed here and the statue of the goddess is worth seeing.



She sits on a lotus flower upon the back of a crocodile. The inscription says: Hail Mother Narmada Hara =(Shiva). Namaami Devi Narmada=I bow down to the Goddess Narmada.

Temples on the Southern Bank of Narmada

Vishnu and Brahma Mandirs (Pictures 11-12)



These are two ancient stone built temples. The southern part of the town is called Brahmapurī and Vishṇupurī on account of these temples.

Mamaleshwara Temple (Picture 10)

The proper name is Amareshwara Temple. It is a protected ancient monument with good architectural stone work. Since the time of Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar, who expired in 1795, 22 Brahmanas paid by the Holkar State, daily performed Liṅgārcana Pūjā.



Rare photo of Lingarcana, making of clay lingam

Each Brahmana was provided with a wooden board having 1300 little holes. In each they put very small miniature clay lingam to re-present Shiva Lingas and

when nearly 14300 lingas were made and worshipped they used to be submerged in the Narmada. In the early part of the 20th century, the number of the Brahmanas was reduced to 11 and at present the number is only five. The wall of the temple contains the inscription of the Mahimnastotra dated 1063 [not certain] A.D.

Some persons propound that this temple contains the real Jyotirlingam. The Jagadguru Shankaracharyas of Dvārakā, Badrīnātha and Kanchi Kamakoti, who visited the place in recent past, have unanimously declared in open meetings that Omkareshwar Temple is the real Jyotirlinga. The reasons given are: Though there are temples on both the banks of Narmada, the important ones are all on the northern bank, e.g. Maheshwara, Mandaleshwara, Omkareshwara, Nemawara, Gauri Shankara, etc.¹⁸³ The northern bank is Vindhya mountain and as God Shiva made His habitation on it as per boon granted to Vindhya, Mamaleshwara which is on the southern bank and in the Satpura mountain could not be the real Jyotirlinga. In all other 11 Jyotirlinga towns there are Omkareshwar temples and not of Mamaleshwara. In Ujjain Mahakaleshwara Jyotirlinga temple is below and Omkareshwara on the higher storey. In Omkareshwara, Mahakaleshwara is above and Omkareshwara is below in the same structure. Adi Shankaracharya took his Dīkshā from Guru Govindapadacharya on the northern bank of Narmada close to Omkareshwara temple where Govindeshwara temple has been built. The stotra of Adi Shankara- charya runs as follows:

कावेरिकानर्मदयोः पवित्रे समागमे सज्जनतारणाय ॥
सदैव मान्धातृपुरे वसन्तमोङ्कारमीशं शिवमेकमीडे ¹⁸⁴ ॥ ४ ॥

This means that Omkara is situated between the two [?] confluences of Narmada and Kaveri and in Māndhātāpuri town which is on the island, while southern bank where Mamaleshwara is situated is outside the island and is known as Godarpura village. [This is not a true translation. It is distortion of truth and misrepresentation of facts.]

There is an age-old custom of Narmada Parikramā. The pilgrims who start the Parikramā from Omkareshwara, take their bath on the northern bank of the Narmada called Koṭi-tīrtha, which adjoins the Omkareshwara temple and then perform worship in the temple, and start the Parikramā, by walking along the

¹⁸³ This is a sweeping remark. Either the writer has lost his moorings or we are too dumb to understand his rash statement.

¹⁸⁴ This verse is quite significant. It does not bring the name of Amareshwara, etc. It gives the location as well and says "One". There is a great deal of controversy on the question whether there is only one Jyotirlinga or two. This booklet published by Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga Temple Trust called *Omkareshwar Darshanika* ascribes this hymn to Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya. If true, quite significant.

northern bank up to Amarakaṇṭaka, the origin of Narmada, then turn and proceed by the southern bank up to the Bay of Khambhāta, where Narmada submerges in the sea. Then they start again on the northern bank and come to Omkareshwara and thus complete the Parikramā. Before the Railway came in 1870, the route to Omkareshwara was from Barwaha on the northern bank and the southern temples including Mamaleshwara were all deserted.¹⁸⁵

Omkareshwara is divided into three parts—Vishnupuri, Brahmapuri and Shivapuri. Shivapuri being on the island in the north, Shiva's abode could not be in the south. The confusion arises from the Jyotirlinga stotra which states: **Ujjayinyām Mahākālam Omkāram Mamaleśvaram**. The correct reading as per Shankaracharya H. H. Jayendra Sarasvati is: **Ujjayinyām Mahākālam Omkāram Amareshvare**, that is, on Amareshvara mountain which is part of Vindhya [? Any evidence or authority? To us all this seems distortion of truth and misrepresentation of facts. Sheer publicity and propaganda.]

Ahilyabai Holkar started Lingarcana in Mamaleshwara temple as it is much less crowded. In Omkareshwara temple in the times of fairs and parvas it is difficult for a person even to stand in the Omkareshwara temple, then what to talk of 22 Brahmanas with big wooden boards in front, sitting in the Omkareshwara temple.

The same Ahilyabai constructed a Nagārakhānā (drum house), a Navagraha temple and a Nandi in the Omkareshwara temple and the drum man is still paid by the Devi Ahilyabai Khasgi Trust. Nothing like this for the Mamaleshwara temple.

The island parikramā on foot and by the boat starts from Omkareshwara temple. No parikramā starts from Mamaleshwara temple. There is a bit of confusion in the Shivapurāṇa also and some people make the compromise by regarding Omkareshvara as the Jyoti (spirit) and Mamaleshwara as the Pārthiva (physical) body of Shiva. Omkareshwara temple is not declared as a protected monument as it was already under the protection of the Omkareshvara Raja and well maintained.

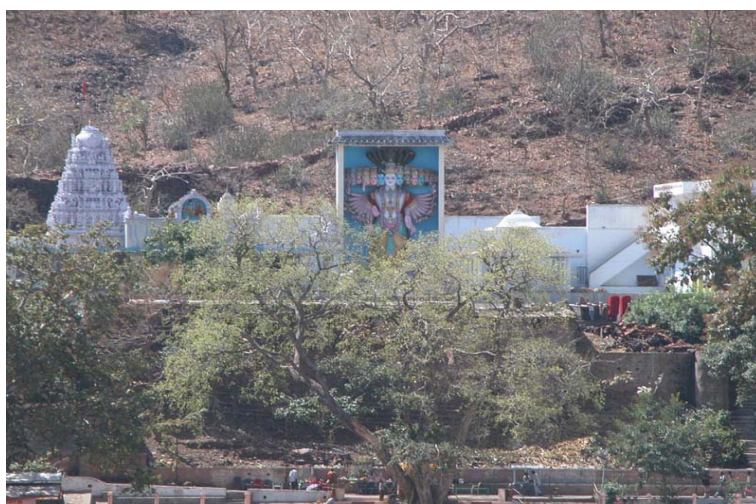
¹⁸⁵ Quite important to keep in mind.

Vrahdheshwar [?]¹⁸⁶ Temple (Picture 11)



It adjoins Mameshwara temple and has a beautiful finely carved frontage and front door.

Annapūrṇā Temple (Picture 13)



There is an ancient type construction, being an old Mārkaṇḍeya Mandir around which the Annapurna Temple Trust of Indore has raised a great complex containing a Sarva Mangalā Temple with three goddesses-- Lakshmi, Parvati and Sarasvati and a thirty five feet tall statue of Lord Krishna depicting the 'Virāṭ Svarūpa' or gigantic image (cosmic form) of Shri Krishna as shown in the

¹⁸⁶ Vṛddheśvara?

Om : One God Universal

Bhagavad Gita. It is a centre of attraction for the pilgrims. Svami Sacchid- anandaji Maharaj, a learned saint, guides the Ashrama, which he has formed.

Mārkaṇḍeya Saṇnyāsa Ashrama (Picture 15)



This is a newly constructed ashrama 30 years back, but it shows how the ancient Ashramas of the ‘Rishis’ functioned. Along with regular Pujas and prayers, there are learned discourses or Pravacanas of the Hindu shastras and scriptures by a body of monks. The Founder Trustee of the Ashrama is Mahatma Ramananda Sarasvatiji,¹⁸⁷ the most learned and revered saint of Omkare- shwara. A garden and gaushala are attached to the Ashrama.

Govindeshwara Gupha and Temple (Picture 9)

It is a well-known historical fact that Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya took his ‘dīkshā’ and scriptural education from his guru Govinda Bhagavadpada at Omkareshwara and devoted here two formative years of his life span of 32 years. The place where he took his ‘diksha’ is consecrated by the erection of a temple aptly called Govindeshwara temple. The place where Guru Govindapada resided and performed penances is called Govinda Guphā. Both the Guphā and the Temple have been renovated at great cost by His Holiness Jagadguru Jayendra Sarasvatiji in 1989, and the renovation inscribed slab was laid at the entrance of the Guphā by the then Rashtrapati Shri R. Venkataraman.¹⁸⁸ The roof [?] of the Guphā has excellent carvings of different designs. To maintain the Guphā and Temple a separate trust named “Shri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetha Seva Trust Omkareshwara”

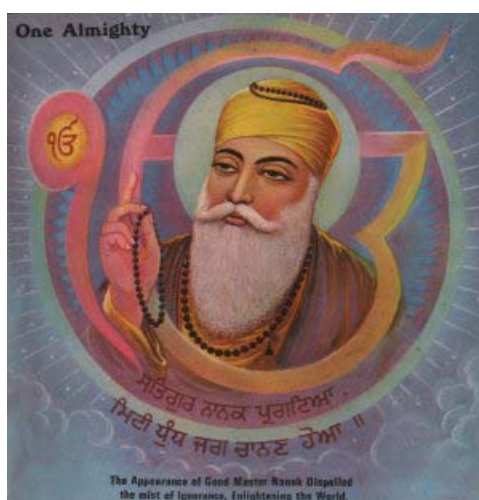
¹⁸⁷ Mentioned in an inscription related to a modern temple.

¹⁸⁸ Imp. to note.

has been founded under the patronage of Shri Shankaracharya Swamigal Srimatam Samsthanam, Kanchipuram of which the present Managing Trustee is Shri M. Natarajan, IPS Retd. and Shri M. T. Mahajan as Executive Trustee with six other trustees all from Madhya Pradesh.

Gurudwara on the Island

Shri Guru Nanak Deo had visited the Omkareshwara temple on his vast travels and to commemorate the event the Sikhs have constructed a Gurudwara which is visited by the Sikhs and Hindus alike.



Temples Across the Kaveri

Siddhavarakūṭa Jaina Temples (Picture 18)

Just as Omkareshwara is one of the foremost 12 Jyotirlingas of the Hindus, so is Siddhavarakūṭa of the 24 Tirthankaras of the Jains. [!] There are a number of Jain temples in Siddhavarakūṭa, some old and renovated and some new ones. Some images found in the old temple bear the date 1488 A.D. Most of the images are of Shantināthajī, a Jain Tīrthankara with the symbol of deer. Two images (statues) possibly of the 1st or 2nd century A.D. had been found in the diggings in about 1935 and they have been now installed in separate temples.

Dharmashalas and Mathas

There are about 25 Dharmashalas and most of them are new. There are also the old Akharas or Maths of Niranjani, Mahan Nirvani, Godad Juna [?] and Panchanami Akharas. Among the Dharmashalas the one constructed by the Baheri family of Sanawad is palatial and imposing. New Ashramas, e.g. Markandeya Sannyasa Ashrama, Annapurna Ashrama, Sadhana Kutira of Rama-krishna Mission, Char [?] Sampradaya, Khedapati Hanuman are all of recent origin. All these institutions have facilitated the accommodation of the growing number of pilgrims.

Anjanīsuta or Vikāṭa Hanumān Mandira (Picture 16)

This is a big temple with a huge 22 feet tall image of Hanumān opened in 1996. There are 24 idols of the Avatāras of God Vishnu kept in different big niches in the walls over which the Bhagavad Gītā is inscribed on marble stones. This is a new attraction for the pilgrims.

Legend of the Land of Human Sacrifices

There has been a legend, in fact a historical fact, of human sacrifice. To appease Kāla Bhairava, the fierce image of God Shiva, a human sacrifice used to be made annually on the Full Moon Day of the Kārtika month, when there was the greatest assemblage of pilgrims in the Kartika fair. The sacrifice was by way of throwing human beings from a 120 feet hill top below on hard rock where there was the image of Bhairava.

The last of such offerings was made in 1824¹⁸⁹ as witnessed by an English Officer and as recorded by Captain Forsyth in the *Highlands of Central India* and the Nimar District Gazetteers of 1868 and 1908. At that time the island belonged to Scindia and the southern part of the town to the British. On hearing of the sacrifice, the officer crossed the Narmada with adequate force just before the sacrifice and he writes:

“The intended victim [?], a youth, approached the [?] morpheous idol (on the island hill top) with a light foot, while a wild pleasure marked his countenance. As soon as this subsided, I addressed myself to him, in the most urgent possible manner to recede from his rash resolve pledging myself to ensure his protection and a competence for his life. In vain I urged him. He now most resolutely replied that it was beyond the power of a human to remove a sacrifice of the powerful Bhairava. So distorted could only be surmounted by a force to exercise that I was unauthorized. His delusion gained strength and the barbarous throng cheered with voice and hand and he indicated a total disregard to my persuasion. A coconut was broken and the worship of the idol done. A priestess gave him some spirit and a pan-leaf which he consumed. A little of the drug was poured over the idol. At the priestess’ request he gave her a silver ring and in so doing he gave a singular proof of his collectiveness. He then appeared on the fatal eminence and rushing forward took a manful leap descending fast with feet foremost with terrifying rapidity till in mid career a projecting rock reversed his position causing headlong fall and instant death.”

It is said the belief was that if anybody stayed alive after a fall from a 120 feet height, the Raja of Mandhata would descend his throne and the victim will ascend the throne. This was a tempting goad [?] for the victim. In ancient times boys and girls were offered to the deity of Omkara. The boys fed by the temple used to be insinuated to go as victims saying if they die they meet Omkara who fed them; and if they survive after the fall, they will get the throne of Mandhata. In fact, under state diplomacy, poison was administered in the liquor or wine offered to the victim in the ceremony just before the fall. One such child (male) was offered before the Omkara image in 1940 [?] when the author of this article was the Manager Court of Wards of the Mandhata Estate. The child was returned to the parents after adoption ceremony and naming him as Omkarasingh (He was a Rajput.) The child came back as a boy of 4 or 5 and was fed by the temple, but after 3 or 4 years disappeared. If a married couple could not get issues, they made a vow that if God gave them issues, the first one would be offered to Him.

¹⁸⁹ Not true. Wrong reporting. Based on ignorance. The year was 1822. 1824 was the year when it was banned by the British Government. Read what Captain James Forsyth says.

We have presented elsewhere in in this Sourcebook the original account of this episode as recorded by Captain James Forsyth from an old document. It appears originally on pp. 181 ff. of his *Highlands of Central India*.

Fairs



Courtesy: Omkareshwar Temple Trust

There are two great Fairs, the Kārtika of 10 days, and Shivaratri of 4 days, when pilgrims assemble in huge crowds. In previous times, they came on bullock carts, cooked their food and remained for 3 or 4 days. Now they come mostly by trains and buses. On the main days of the fairs and on Somavatī Amā- vāsyā the assemblage aggregates to more than a lakh [?].

The population and the market of the town are very rapidly increasing along with the increased tourist traffic. Still there is no Tourist Department. Many of the old temples of historical and architectural importance need renovat- on. [stress added]. With the coming up of the Narmada Sagar and the Omkareshwar Dam of Narmada, there will be a spiral growth of the town.

The next, i.e. the last page displays the **Parikramā Mārga**.

Darshanikā Hindi

Quite a good deal has been written with regard to the holy home of pilgrimage famed as Omkareshwar or Omkara Mandhata. But at least some of it is a bad deal any way since it is only a copycat performance. Most of the writings are written in popular vein for the simple folk who have more unquestionable devotion than reasonable reason—**bhole bhāle rāha calate loga!**

Here is something quite original. It is authentic to some extent. It is creative. It is official. It deserves special attention.

This little publication entitled *Omkareshwar Darshanikā* is issued under the authorship of M. T. Mahajan and is Published by Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga Temple Trust.

Therefore, we are reproducing it here in full in our collection. It is issued in two languages, Hindi and English, side by side. The English part is very poor from the literary and linguistic point of view. Yet we have already reproduced it. Now we are reproducing the Hindi version for the benefit of those who know only the national language of India.

ओंकारेश्वर

ओंकारेश्वर, जिसे मान्धाता ओंकारेश्वर भी कहते हैं, १२ ज्योतिर्लिंगों में से एक है। यह हिन्दुओं के इष्ट देवता 'शिव' की ज्योतिर्लिंग पार्थिव अभिव्यक्ति है। यह पवित्र नर्मदा नदी के तट पर खंडवा जिले (म. प्र.) में स्थित है। ओंकारेश्वर मोरटक्का अथवा ओंकारेश्वर रोड रेलवे स्टेशन से १३ किलोमीटर तथा खंडवा एवं इन्दोर से ७७ किलोमीटर की दूरी पर स्थित है। ओंकारेश्वर का प्रमुख आकर्षण ओंकारेश्वर मन्दिर है जो नर्मदा नदी में निर्मित टापू पर शोभित है। मन्दिर के अतिरिक्त समूचा शहर नदी के दक्षिणी तट पर स्थित है। प्राचीन काल में ओंकारेश्वर नगर टापू-पहाड़ी पर स्थित था। वर्तमान में इसके केवल अवशेष बचे हैं। समय के साथ साथ ओंकारेश्वर नगर नदी तट के समीप आबाद होता चला गया। प्रारंभ में जनसंख्या मात्र ६०० थी, जो १९७० की जनगणनानुसार बढ़ कर १३५०, एवं १९९५ में बढ़ कर ६००० हो गई। आबादी में वृद्धि का मूल कारण पर्यटन सुविधाएं एवं १९७९ में केन्टीलीवर पुल का निर्माण है। १९५० तक ओंकारेश्वर में केवल एक पुलिस चौकी व प्राथमिक पाठशाला थी। उसके बाद हाईस्कूल, सिविल डिस्पेन्सरी, बैंक, दूरभाष केन्द्र, नगर पंचायत, सिंचाई उपविभाग स्थापित किए गए।

पौराणिक इतिहास एवं दन्तकथाएं

ऐसा माना जाता है कि महाराजा मान्धाता ने, जो इक्ष्वाकु कुल के थे, यहां पर तपस्या की थी। उनका सिंहासन आज भी ओंकारेश्वर मन्दिर में है। एक किंवदन्ती के अनुसार महाराजा मान्धाता के कठोर तप के कारण ही शंकर भगवान् ने ओंकार के रूप में अपना निवास स्थान ओंकारेश्वर में बनाया। शिवपुराण के अनुसार देवमुनि नारद ने, जिन्हें संसार के सर्व प्रथम संचार मन्त्री की संज्ञा भी दी जाती है, विन्ध्याचल पर्वत का, जो नर्मदा के उत्तरी तट पर स्थित है, भ्रमण किया। विन्ध्याचल ने देवमुनि नारद के असंतुष्ट भाव का कारण पूछा। नारद जी ने कहा कि किस प्रकार के पर्वत हो तुम, जहां एक भी देवी या देवता का वास नहीं है। कैलास अथवा सुमेरु पर्वत की भांति यहां ईश्वर का वास क्यों नहीं है। इस पर विन्ध्याचल ने महातप किया। इस तपस्या से प्रसन्न होकर भगवान् शङ्कर ने विन्ध्याचल को साक्षात् दर्शन दिए तथा ओंकारेश्वर को अपना स्थायी वास बना लिया। शिवपुराण में ऐसे कई संदर्भ हैं जिनसे विदित होता है कि भगवान् शङ्कर ने अपने भक्तों की तपस्या के फल-स्वरूप १२ ज्योतिर्लिंगों पर अपना स्थायी वास कैसे बनाया।

ओंकारेश्वर का अद्वितीय प्राकृतिक सौन्दर्य

ओंकारेश्वर का मान्धाता भाग एक टापू पर स्थित है जो चार किलोमीटर लम्बा तथा दो किलोमीटर चौड़ा है। एक दन्तकथा के अनुसार दक्षिण से कावेरी नदी (२२ मील लम्बी) नर्मदा नदी (८१५ [८५०?]) मील लम्बी से मिलने आई। परन्तु बड़ी बहन ने उसका उचित स्वागत नहीं किया तो वह रोषवश नर्मदा को काटती हुई, तथा उससे बिना मिले ही अपना बहाव व नाम भी अलग रखती हुई, नर्मदा के उत्तर में अग्रसर हो गई। नर्मदा के मनाने पर कावेरी नर्मदा से मिलने पर सहमत हो गई और अपना दूसरा व अन्तिम संगम स्थापित किया। इससे एक टापू का निर्माण हुआ जो जलस्तर से ४५० से ५०० फीट ऊंचा है। इसे पुराण में वैदूर्य मणि पर्वत नाम से जाना जाता है।

टापू के उत्तर में कावेरी है जो उथली व चौड़ी है, तथा दक्षिण में नर्मदा है जो गहरी व संकरी है। टापू पर दो ऊंची पहाड़ियां हैं जिन्हें एक घाटी विभाजित करती है जिससे ऊंचाई से इसका आकार ॐ की तरह दीखता है। नर्मदा के उत्तर की पहाड़ी विन्ध्याचल है तथा दक्षिण की सतपुड़ा है। इन दोनों के बीच नर्मदा एक गहरा शांत जलाशय बनाती है। इस जलाशय में पहले अनेक मगरमच्छ व बड़ी मछलियां थीं। वे जीव पूर्णतः शान्त व पालतू थे और मनुष्य के हाथ से अन्न ग्रहण करते थे। यह महान् जलाशय १९७९ में निर्मित केन्टीलीवर पुल से २७०

फीट नीचे है। इस पुल ने प्राकृतिक सौन्दर्य और निखारा है तथा इस स्थान का भूगोल [भूस्वरूप?] बदल दिया है।

संपूर्ण स्थल अत्यन्त सुरम्य व नयनाभिराम है। मकानों की कतारें, मंदिर, धर्म-शालाएं, दुकानें, राजा का महल तथा ओंकारेश्वर मंदिर इस स्थान को अलग पहचान देते हैं। संकरी पत्थर से निर्मित गलियाँ, जिनके आसपास रंग-बिरंगे मकान बने हुए हैं, यह संपूर्ण दृश्य एक महाद्वीपी समुद्रतटीय नगर की झलक प्रदान करता है। मन्दिर परिसर में अनेक दुकानें हैं जहाँ पूजा की सामग्री मिलती है। जैसे धार्मिक पुस्तकें, मूर्तियाँ, देवी-देवताओं के चित्र, नारियल आदि। ओंकारेश्वर को 'ओंकारजी' भी कहते हैं। ओंकार 'ॐ' का ही एक रूप है, जिसे हिन्दू अत्यन्त पवित्रता से प्रत्येक प्रार्थना से पूर्व उपयोग करते हैं अथवा उच्चारण करते हैं।

यह स्थान तीन हिस्सों में विभाजित है --(1) शिवपुरी या शिवनगरी उत्तरी तट पर है, यहाँ मुख्य मन्दिर है। (२) ब्रह्मपुरी, दक्षिण तट पर है, यहाँ ब्रह्माजी का मंदिर है। और (३) विष्णुपुरी, यह भी दक्षिण तट पर है, यहाँ विष्णुजी का मंदिर है। इन दोनों के मध्य में एक घाटी है, जहाँ पर गोमुख से कपिलधारा निकलती है।

नगर का इतिहास

मध्यकाल में मान्धाता ओंकारेश्वर धार के परमार राजवंश के अधिराज्य में एक भील कबीले के सरदार द्वारा शासित था। इसके बाद मालवा के सुल्तान द्वारा शासित रहा। तदुपरान्त ग्वालियर के सिंधिया शासकों के हाथों, अंत में ब्रिटिश साम्राज्य को १८२४ में सौंपा गया। अंतिम भील सरदार नत्थू भील था, जिसका दरयाओ गोसाई नामक प्रसिद्ध पुजारी से विवाद हो गया था। पुजारी ने जयपुर के महाराज से मदद माँगी। महाराज ने अपने भाई भारतसिंह चौहान को भेजा, जो झालरापाटन का सूबेदार था। यह महत्त्वपूर्ण नहीं है कि लडाई कैसे शुरू हुई। संपूर्ण विवरण का सार यह है कि नत्थू भील ने, अपनी एकमात्र पुत्री का विवाह भारतसिंह से कर दिया, ताकि विवाद समाप्त किया जा सके। १९६५ ई० में भारतसिंह कुछ अन्य राजपूतों के साथ मान्धाता में बस गया। इन राजपूतों ने भील कन्याओं से विवाह किया। इनकी सन्तानें भीलाला कहलाई। इसके पश्चात् भारतसिंह के वंशजों ने ओंकारेश्वर की बागडोर संभाली। ब्रिटिश राज्य में ओंकारेश्वर इनके पास मात्र जागीर की भाँति था। आजादी के बाद जागीरी का हक भी समाप्त कर दिया गया। भारतसिंह के उत्तराधिकारी राजपूत कहलाते हैं।

टापू के उत्तरी तट पर स्थित मन्दिर

ओंकारेश्वर मन्दिर

श्रद्धालुओं के लिए ओंकारेश्वर मन्दिर अत्यन्त आकर्षण व श्रद्धा का स्थल है। इसमें कोई अतिशयोक्ति नहीं है कि ओंकारेश्वर मंदिर के कारण ही ओंकारेश्वर नगर का अस्तित्व है। यह मंदिर किसने और कब बनवाया यह प्रश्नजनक बात है। मंदिर अथवा उसका परमपावन गर्भ-गृह जहाँ ज्योतिर्लिङ्ग है, एक प्राचीन छोटा मंदिर है। इसकी बनावट पुरानी है। इसका गुम्बद पत्थरों के परत पर परत जमाकर बनाया गया है। यह मंदिर नर्मदा के उत्तरी भाग में स्थित है जो काफी गहरा है। अतः इसका विस्तार बाद में उत्तर की ओर किया गया। बाद के विस्तार में बनावट नई शैली की मिलती है। उत्तर की ओर विस्तार के कारण ही प्रमुख गर्भगृह न तो मुख्य द्वार के सामने है और न ही शिखर के नीचे है, जो बाद में बनाये गये थे। मंदिर में आलीशान, विशाल सभा-मंडप है जो लगभग ६० बड़े बड़े भूरे पत्थर के खम्भों पर बना है। ये खम्भे १४ फीट ऊँचे हैं, तथा इन पर अत्यन्त मनोरम नक्काशी है। मंदिर ५ मंजिला है, तथा हर एक में विभिन्न भगवानों की स्थापना है।

मन्दिर में तीन प्रकार की पूजा की जाती है। प्रथम पूजा प्रातः काल में मन्दिर के ट्रस्ट द्वारा की जाती है। दूसरी पूजा सिंधिया स्टेट के पुजारी द्वारा की जाती है। तथा तीसरी अर्थात् अन्तिम पूजा होल्कर स्टेट के पुजारी द्वारा सायंकाल में संपन्न की जाती है। मन्दिर सदैव भक्तों व श्रद्धालुओं से भरा रहता है, जो पवित्र नदी नर्मदा में स्नान करने के उपरान्त आते हैं। अपने साथ वे नर्मदा का जल, नारियल व पूजा की अन्य सामग्री भी लाते हैं। कई भक्तगण पुजारियों द्वारा पूजा या अभिषेक करवाते हैं। पर्व के समय भक्तों की भीड़ को रोकना अथवा नियंत्रित करना बहुत मुश्किल हो जाता है।

प्रत्येक सोमवार को सोने की तीन मुख वाली भगवान् ओंकार की प्रतिमा को पालकी में स्थापित कर शोभायात्रा निकाली जाती है। इसमें मन्दिर के प्रमुख पुजारी, अधिकारी गण, और भक्त-जन शामिल होते हैं। सर्वप्रथम यह शोभायात्रा बैड बाजे के साथ नर्मदा नदी तक पूजा के लिए ले जाई जाती है, तथा बाद में सम्पूर्ण नगर में यह शोभायात्रा निकलती है।

श्रावण के पावन मास में बहुत विशाल व भव्य शोभायात्राएँ निकलती हैं, जिन्हें 'सोमवार सवारी' कहते हैं। हजारों भक्तों द्वारा 'ॐ शंभु भोलेनाथ' का मंत्रोच्चारण करने से सम्पूर्ण वातावरण अत्यन्त पवित्र हो जाता है। सारे मार्ग में गुलाल बिखेरती यह शोभायात्राएँ संपूर्ण वातावरण को लाल रंग प्रदान करती प्रतीत होती है।

मंदिर में अनेक विशिष्ट व्यक्ति आते रहते हैं। पहले कई राजा, महाराजा, महारानी, गवर्नर व वाईसरॉय भी दर्शन हेतु आते थे। लॉर्ड कर्जन ने भी अवलोकन किया था, तथा इसे पुरातत्त्व विभाग के अन्तर्गत रखने एवं संरक्षण के निर्देश दिए थे। इसके कुछ समय बाद लॉर्ड रीडिंग मन्दिर में दर्शन हेतु आए, तथा उन्होंने मन्दिर को एक धातु का बड़ा लैम्प भेंट किया, जिस पर प्रथम विश्वयुद्ध में शहीद हुए सैनिकों के प्रति संस्कृत में श्रद्धांजली लिखी थी। १९८९ में राष्ट्रपति आर॰ वेंकटरमन इस मंदिर में दर्शन करने के लिए आए।

ओंकारेश्वर मंदिर सन् १९५९ में मध्यप्रदेश पब्लिक ट्रस्ट एक्ट के अन्तर्गत पब्लिक ट्रस्ट घोषित किया गया तथा प्रबंधन की योजना १९६७ में लागू की गई। म॰प्र॰ पब्लिक ट्रस्ट एक्ट की धारा २७ के अन्तर्गत यहाँ ७ ट्रस्टी नियुक्त किये गये, जिनमें मान्धाता के राव (प्रबन्धक ट्रस्टी के रूप में), एवं उनके द्वारा मनोनीत दो सदस्य, तथा जिला पंचायत खंडवा, ब्लाक पंचायत पुनासा, एवं नगर पंचायत ओंकारेश्वर से एक एक प्रतिनिधि होते हैं। ट्रस्ट की वार्षिक आय लगभग ३५ लाख रुपये है। मंदिर के रखरखाव व पूजा आदि के बाद जो पैसा बचता है उसे नगर के अन्य विकास कार्य में लगाया जाता है। वर्तमान प्रबन्धक ट्रस्टी राव परिवार के राव देवेन्द्र सिंह जी हैं।

दूसरे मंदिर जो टापू की परिक्रमा के अन्तर्गत आते हैं

ऋणमुक्तेश्वर मंदिर (चित्र -4)

यह नर्मदा और कावेरी के दूसरे और अन्तिम संगम पर स्थित है। ऐसी मान्यता है कि जो भी भक्तगण यहाँ आकर चने की दाल अर्पित करते हैं वे अपने समस्त पुराने पूर्वजन्मों के ऋणों से मुक्त हो जाते हैं।

गौरी सोमनाथ मंदिर (चित्र -6)

यह तारे के आकार का विशाल मंदिर है। इसमें छः फीट ऊँचा विराट् शिवलिंग स्थापित है। यह कहा जाता है कि दो वयस्क व्यक्ति भी मिल कर इस शिवलिंग के घेरे को नहीं पकड़ सकते हैं। केवल मामा व भाँजे ही मिलकर यह कार्य कर सकते हैं। शिवलिंग अत्यन्त पुराना है। यह बिल्कुल चिकने काले पत्थर का बना है तथा इसमें अद्वितीय चमक है। इसके सामने उसी पत्थर से बना नंदी बैठा है।

ऐसा कहा जाता है कि पहले यह शिवलिंग सफेद चमकदार पत्थर का बना हुआ था, तथा इसमें देखने से व्यक्ति अपने आने वाले जन्म को देख सकता था। सुल्तान औरंगजेब, जो

कट्टर इस्लाम भक्त तथा मूर्तिभंजक था, अपने दक्षिण भारत के दौरे के पूर्व ओंकारेध्वर आया। वहाँ उसने मंदिर को बहुत क्षति पहुँचाई, जो आज भी प्रमाणित है। उसने गौरी सोमनाथ मन्दिर के शिवलिङ्ग के सामने अपने अगले जन्म को देखना चाहा तो उसे उसमें सुअर की आकृति दीखी। इस घटना से वह इतना क्रोधित हुआ कि उसने शिवलिङ्ग को जलाने का प्रयत्न किया जिससे संपूर्ण शिवलिङ्ग काला हो गया तथा उसका भविष्य के जन्म को दर्शाने वाला गुण समाप्त हो गया। कर्नल जेम्स टाँड ने अपनी पुस्तक 'एनल्स एण्ड ऐन्टिक्विटीज ऑफ राजस्थान' में लगभग दो शताब्दी पूर्व लिखा है कि औरंगजेब ओंकारेध्वर आया था तथा उसने शिवलिङ्ग को क्षतिग्रस्त किया था, जिसके फलस्वरूप उस खंडित शिवलिङ्ग में से खून की धारा बही थी।

चाँद-सूरज द्वार (चित्र-5)

यह संरक्षित प्राचीन अवशेष है जो लाल व पीले पत्थर से बना विशाल द्वार है, जिस पर बहुत बारीक व सुन्दर नक्काशी है, जैसे लकड़ी पर की जाती है।

सिद्धनाथ मंदिर (चित्र-7)

यह मंदिर वास्तुशिल्प की दृष्टि से अत्यंत शानदार व प्रभावशाली है। लार्ड कर्जन द्वारा पिछली शताब्दी में इसे पुरातत्त्व संरक्षण प्रदान किया गया था। यह एक पठार पर बना है। इसकी नींव मजबूत व विशाल है, जिसके चारों कोनों में ५० हाथी नक्काशी द्वारा बनाए गए हैं, जो मस्ती की मुद्रा में हैं। ये पाँच फीट ऊँचे हैं। इनमें विनोदी भाव व लहराती हुई सूंड बनाई गई हैं। इन पर महावत सवार हैं तथा अपने पैरों तले ये शिकार को रौंद रहे हैं। इनमें से दो नागपुर संग्रहालय में रक्खे गये हैं। केन्द्रीय मंदिर में चारों ओर से प्रवेश द्वार हैं। इन चारों द्वारों के सामने चार भव्य सभा मण्डप हैं। हर एक मंडप में १८ पत्थर के खंभे हैं, जिन पर आकर्षक मूर्तियाँ बनाई गई हैं।

जब मन्दिर अपने उत्कर्ष अथवा पूर्णता पर रहा होगा तो अत्यंत भव्य होगा। इसमें पाँच शिखर थे, चार तो द्वारमंडपों पर थे, तथा पाँचवा इनके ऊपर स्वयं मन्दिर पर था।

आशापुरी मंदिर (चित्र-8)

इस मन्दिर में राव परिवार व उस समय की जनजाति की कुलदेवी की प्रतिमा है जिसकी विधिपूर्वक नियमित अर्चना की जाती है। देवी की प्रतिमा अत्यन्त भव्य तथा दर्शनीय है।

नर्मदा के दक्षिणी तट पर स्थित मंदिर

विष्णु एवं ब्रह्मा के मंदिर (चित्र-11, 12)

इन प्राचीन मंदिरों के कारण ओंकारेश्वर का दक्षिणी भाग विष्णुपुरी और ब्रह्मपुरी कहलाता है।

ममलेश्वर मन्दिर (चित्र-10)

इसका सही नाम अमरेश्वर मंदिर है। इसके पूर्व भाग में ब्रह्मपुरी है और इसके पश्चिम भाग में विष्णुपुरी है। यह प्राचीन वास्तुशिल्प में पत्थर के काम का अद्वितीय स्मारक है। महारानी अहिल्याबाई होल्कर के, जिनका निधन १७५०¹⁹⁰ में हुआ, समय से २२ ब्राह्मण प्रतिदिन लिङ्गार्चन पूजा किया करते थे। प्रत्येक ब्राह्मण के पास लकड़ी का तख्ता होता था जिसमें १३०० छोटे छोटे खाने होते थे। हर खाने में मिट्टी का लिङ्ग रखा जाता था जो शिवलिङ्ग का निरूपण माना जाता था। जब १४३०० ऐसे शिवलिङ्ग का निर्माण व पूजन हो जाता था तो उन्हें नर्मदा में विसर्जित कर दिया जाता था। बीसवीं शताब्दी के प्रारंभ में ब्राह्मणों की संख्या घटकर ११ रह गई, और अब इनकी संख्या ५ है। मन्दिर की दीवार पर महिम्न स्तोत्र के लेख मिलते हैं, जो १०६३ ई. के हैं।

कुछ लोगों के अनुसार इस मंदिर में असली ज्योतिर्लिङ्ग है। द्वारका, बद्रीनाथ व कांची कामकोटी के जगद्गुरु शंकराचार्यों ने सर्वसम्मति से यह घोषित किया है कि ओंकारेश्वर मंदिर में ही असली ज्योतिर्लिङ्ग है। इस बात को साबित करने हेतु तर्क दिये हैं कि नर्मदा के उत्तरी तट पर ही सभी महत्त्वपूर्ण मंदिर बने हुए हैं--जैसे कि महेश्वर, मंडलेश्वर, ओंकारेश्वर, नेमा - वर, गौरीशंकर आदि। उत्तरी तट पर ही विन्ध्य पर्वत है, तथा शंकर भगवान् द्वारा विन्ध्य पर निवास करना विन्ध्य को उनके द्वारा प्रदान किये गये आशीर्वादों में से एक है। ममलेश्वर में, जो दक्षिणी तट पर स्थित है तथा सतपुडा पर्वत के अन्तर्गत आता है, असली ज्योतिर्लिङ्ग की संभावना नहीं है।

समस्त ११ ज्योतिर्लिङ्ग युक्त नगरों में ओंकारेश्वर मंदिर है न कि ममलेश्वर मंदिर। उज्जैन में महाकालेश्वर ज्योतिर्लिङ्ग मंदिर नीचे हैं, उसके ऊपर ओंकारेश्वर मंदिर है। ओंकारेश्वर में महाकालेश्वर ऊपर बना है तथा ओंकारेश्वर मंदिर नीचे उसी आकार का बना हुआ है। आदि शंकराचार्य ने अपनी दीक्षा गुरु गोविन्दाचार्य से नर्मदा के उत्तरी तट पर ओंकारेश्वर मंदिर के

¹⁹⁰ Wrong. The correct date is 1795 as already recorded in the English version. An irresponsible work.

समीप ली थी, जहाँ गोविन्देश्वर मंदिर बना है। आदि शङ्कराचार्य का स्तोत्र (Stotra) इस प्रकार है -

कावेरिकानर्मदयोः पवित्रे समागमे सज्जनतारणाय ।
सदैव मान्धातृपुरे वसन्तम्, ओंकारमीशं शिवमेकमीडे ॥

इसका तात्पर्य यह हुआ कि ओंकार स्थित है नर्मदा व कावेरी के संगम पर, मान्धातापुरी (नगर) में, जो एक टापू पर स्थित है।

यहाँ प्राचीन रीति नर्मदा की परिक्रमा करने की यह है। भक्तगण परिक्रमा प्रारम्भ करते हैं ओंकारेश्वर मंदिर के समीप, उत्तरी तट पर स्नान करके, जिसे कोटितीर्थ भी कहते हैं। परिक्रमा प्रारंभ करके नर्मदा के उत्तरी तट पर चलते हुए ये अमरकंटक तक जाते हैं, जो नर्मदा का उद्गम स्थान है। इसके पश्चात् वे लौटते समय दक्षिणी तट पर चलते हुए खम्भात की खाड़ी तक जाते हैं, जहाँ नर्मदा समुद्र में विलीन हो जाती है। इसके बाद पुनः उत्तरी तट पर चलते हुए, परिक्रमा पूर्ण करने के हेतु ओंकारेश्वर आते हैं।

१८७० के पूर्व जब रेल लाइन नहीं थी, ओंकारेश्वर पहुँचने का मार्ग बडवाह से होकर जाता था। इस मार्ग से नर्मदा के उत्तरी तट पर पर पहुँचा जा सकता था। दक्षिणी तट के मंदिर, जिसमें ममलेश्वर भी है, निर्जन रहते थे। ओंकारेश्वर तीन पुरी में विभाजित है --विष्णुपुरी, ब्रह्मपुरी, शिवपुरी। शिवपुरी टापू पर स्थित है जो कि उत्तर में है। अतः शिवजी का निवास दक्षिणी तट पर नहीं हो सकता है। ज्योतिर्लिङ्ग के स्तोत्र के कारण भ्रांति उत्पन्न होती है। इसके अनुसार माना जाता है 'उज्जयिनाम् महाकालम्' तथा 'ओंकारं ममलेश्वरम्'। शङ्कराचार्य एच० एच० जयेन्द्र सरस्वती जी के अनुसार वास्तव में 'उज्जयिन्यां महाकालम् ओंकारम् अमरेश्वरे' सही पाठ है। ओंकार अमरेश्वर पर्वत पर है और यह पर्वत विंध्य पर्वत श्रेणी में आता है।

अहिल्याबाई होल्कर ने लिङ्गार्चन ममलेश्वर में इसलिए प्रारंभ किया था कि पर्व व मेले के समय ओंकारेश्वर में अत्यधिक भीड़ हो जाती है। ऐसे में २२ ब्राह्मण लकड़ी के तख्तों सहित पूजा-अर्चना नियमित रूप से नहीं कर सकते थे। अहिल्याबाई ने नगारखाना, नवग्रह मंदिर व नंदी ओंकारेश्वर मंदिर परिसर में ही बनवाए, तथा इसका रखरखाव अभी तक अहिल्याबाई खासगी ट्रस्ट द्वारा किया जाता है। ऐसी ममलेश्वर के लिये कोई व्यवस्था नहीं की गई है।

टापू की पैदल परिक्रमा तथा नाव द्वारा परिक्रमा ओंकारेश्वर मंदिर से ही प्रारम्भ होती है। शिवपुराण भी थोड़ा संशयजनक है। कुछ लोग इस नतीजे पर पहुँचे हैं कि ओंकारेश्वर

ज्योति है तथा ममलेध्वर पार्थिव । अर्थात् ओंकारेध्वर शिव की आत्मा तथा ममलेध्वर पार्थिव शरीर है । ओंकारेध्वर मंदिर को संरक्षित स्मारक घोषित नहीं किया गया है, क्योंकि यह पहले से ही ओंकारेध्वर राजा के संरक्षण में था तथा इसकी देखभाल भलीभाँति की जा रही थी ।

बृहदेध्वर (चित्र-11)

यह ममलेध्वर मंदिर से लगा हुआ है तथा इसमें मुख्य भाग तथा मुख्य दरवाजे पर अतिसुन्दर, सूक्ष्म नक्काशी है ।

अन्नपूर्णा मंदिर (चित्र-13)

इसकी बनावट प्राचीन है । पुराने मार्कण्डेय मंदिर के आसपास अन्नपूर्णा मंदिर ट्रस्ट, इन्दौर द्वारा एक विशाल कॉम्प्लेक्स निर्मित किया गया है । यहाँ सर्वमंगला मंदिर है, जिसमें तीन देवियों - लक्ष्मी, पार्वती एवं सरस्वती जी की प्रतिमाएँ हैं । साथ ही भगवान् श्रीकृष्ण की ३५ फीट ऊँची मूर्ति है, जो उनका विराट् रूप दर्शाती है, जिसका उल्लेख श्रीमद्भगवद् गीता में मिलता है । यह श्रद्धालुओं के लिए आकर्षण का केन्द्र है । विद्वान् संत स्वामी सच्चिदानंदजी महाराज के द्वारा आश्रम की स्थापना की गई तथा उन्हीं के निर्देशन में यह संचालित किया जा रहा है ।

मार्कण्डेय सन्यास आश्रम (चित्र-15)

यह ३० वर्ष पूर्व ही बनाया गया है । परन्तु यह पुराने ऋषि आश्रमों के समस्त गुण लिये हुए है । यहाँ नियमित पूजा-प्रार्थना होती है, साथ ही विद्वानों द्वारा हिन्दू शास्त्र व लेखों पर प्रवचन होते हैं ।

इस आश्रम के संस्थापक ट्रस्टी महात्मा रामानन्द सरस्वतीजी हैं, जो ओंकारेध्वर के विद्वान्, आदरणीय व श्रद्धेय सन्त हैं । आश्रम से जुड़ी हुई एक गोशाला है, साथ ही एक उद्यान भी है ।

गोविन्देध्वर गुफा व मन्दिर (चित्र-9)

यह सर्वविदित तथ्य है कि जगद्गुरु आदि शंकराचार्य ने दीक्षा व लेख शिक्षा अपने गुरु गोविन्द भगवत्पाद से ओंकारेध्वर में ग्रहण की थी तथा यहाँ उन्होंने दो वर्ष का समय व्यतीत किया था । वह स्थान जहाँ उन्होंने दीक्षा ली थी, एक मन्दिर के रूप में परिवर्तित होकर

गोविन्देश्वर मन्दिर कहलाता है। वह स्थान जहाँ गुरु गोविन्द भगवत्पाद रहते थे तथा साधना करते थे, गोविन्द गुफा कहलाता है। गुफा तथा गोविन्देश्वर में नवीनीकरण लाने के लिए भारी लागत लगा कर परम पूज्य जगद्गुरु जयेन्द्र सरस्वती जी द्वारा १९८९ में किया गया [?]। उस समय पदस्थ राष्ट्रपति श्री आर० वैकटरमण द्वारा नवीनीकरण का शिलान्यास किया गया। गुफा की छत पर अद्वितीय नक्काशी है, जिसमें विभिन्न आकृतियाँ बनी हैं। गुफा व मन्दिर की देखरेख के हेतु एक पृथक् ट्रस्ट स्थापित किया गया है, इसका नाम 'श्री काँची काम-कोटि पीठ सेवा ट्रस्ट, ओंकारेश्वर' है। इस की स्थापना श्री शंकराचार्य स्वामिगल श्री मंतम संस्थानम्, कांचिपुरम् के संरक्षण में की गई। वर्तमान में इसके प्रबन्धक ट्रस्टी श्री एम० नटराजन (सेवानिवृत्त आई० पी० एस०) हैं तथा श्री एम० टी० महाजन एवं स्वामी तेज आनंद कार्यकारी ट्रस्टी हैं, ६ अन्य ट्रस्टी हैं, ये सभी मध्यप्रदेश से हैं।

गुरुद्वारा

श्री गुरु नानक देवजी अपने लम्बे धार्मिक भ्रमण के दौरान ओंकारेश्वर मंदिर के दर्शन हेतु ओंकारेश्वर पधारे थे, इसकी पवित्र स्मृति स्वरूप सिक्खों ने यहाँ गुरुद्वारा बनवाया है जहाँ सिक्ख व हिन्दू समान भावना से दर्शन करने आते हैं।

कावेरी पार के मन्दिर

सिद्धवरकूट जैन मंदिर (चित्र-18)

जैसे ओंकारेश्वर बारह ज्योतिर्लिंगों में से एक है, वैसे ही सिद्धवरकूट जैनियों के २४ तीर्थकरों के प्रमुख तीर्थों में से एक है। सिद्धवरकूट में अनेक जैन मंदिर हैं। इनमें से कई पुराने हैं। कुछ का नवीनीकरण किया गया है, कुछ नये बने हुए हैं। कुछ पुराने मंदिरों में १४८८ ई० की प्रतिमाएँ हैं। अधिकांश प्रतिमाएँ शांतिनाथजी की हैं जो जैन तीर्थकर थे। इन प्रतिमाओं के साथ हिरण प्रतीक स्वरूप बने हैं। दो मूर्तियाँ जो संभवतः प्रथम व द्वितीय शताब्दी ई० की हैं, १९३५ में खुदाई में प्राप्त हुई थीं। इन्हें दो भिन्न मन्दिरों में स्थापित किया गया है।

धर्मशालाएँ तथा मठ

यहाँ लगभग २५ धर्मशालाएँ हैं, जिनमें से अधिकांश नई हैं। यहाँ पुराने अखाड़े एवं मठ हैं जैसे--निरंजनी, महानिर्वाणी, गोदाद [गोडर?] जूना, तथा पंचनामी अखाड़ा। धर्म शालाओं में बाहेती परिवार, सनावद द्वारा निर्मित धर्मशाला अत्यन्त भव्य है। नये आश्रम जैसे मार्कण्डेय

संन्यास आश्रम, अन्नपूर्णा आश्रम, साधना कुटीर (रामकृष्ण मिशन), खेडा- पति हनुमान्, विज्ञानशाला, चार संप्रदाय आदि कुछ समय पूर्व ही बने हैं। इन सभी में श्रद्धालुओं के ठहरने की व्यवस्था है।

अंजनीसुत अथवा विकट हनुमान् मंदिर (चित्र - 16)

अंजनीसुत बड़ा मन्दिर है, जिसमें हनुमानजी की विशाल २२ फीट उंची प्रतिमा है। यह मन्दिर १९९६ में श्रद्धालुओं के लिए खोला गया है। इसमें भगवान् विष्णु के समस्त अवतारों सहित २४ प्रतिमाएँ हैं। ये प्रतिमाएँ विभिन्न दीवारों के आलों में स्थापित हैं। जिनके ऊपर की ओर संगमरमर के पत्थरों पर श्रीमद्भगवद् गीता अंकित हैं। यह भक्तगणों के लिए नए आकर्षण का केन्द्र है।

नरबलि की दंतकथा

प्राचीनकाल में यहाँ दी जाने वाली नरबलि की प्रथा के विषय में कहा जाता है कि काल भैरव को शांत करने के हेतु भगवान् शिव की उग्र रूप वाली मूर्ति बनाई जाती थी तथा नरबलि दी जाती थी। यह कार्य कार्तिक महिने में पूर्णिमा के दिन किया जाता था। इस कार्तिक मेले में असंख्य भक्तगण एकत्रित होते थे। नरबलि की प्रथा के अनुसार १२० फीट की ऊँचाई से लोगों को नीचे ठोस चट्टान पर फेंका जाता था जहाँ काल भैरव की मूर्ति बनी होती थी।

ऐसी नरबलि की अंतिम घटना १८२२ में हुई थी, जिसके प्रत्यक्षदर्शी एक अंग्रेज अधिकारी थे। इस बात का जिक्र कैप्टन फोरसिथ ने वर्ष १८६८ एवं १९०८ में 'हार्डलैंड्स ऑफ सेंट्रल इंडिया' तथा 'द निमाड़ डिस्ट्रिक्ट गजेट' में किया है। उस समय टापू सिंधिया राज के आधीन था तथा नगर का दक्षिणी भाग अंग्रेजों के आधीन था। जब नरबलि दी जाने की खबर मिली तो अंग्रेज अधिकारी पुलिस बल के साथ नर्मदा पार गए। उस अधिकारी ने लिखा है - 'नरबलि के लिए जवान लड़के को चुना था। वह ऊँची पहाड़ी पर खड़ा था, उसके चेहरे पर धार्मिक उन्माद नज़र आता था। उस लड़के को ऐसा करने से रोकने के लिए काफी प्रयत्न किया गया। उससे कहा गया कि बाद में उसकी पूर्ण रक्षा की जाएगी, परन्तु वह तो धार्मिक उन्माद की स्थिति में था। उसने जवाब दिया कि अब कोई भी ताकत काल भैरव के लिए तय बलि को वापस नहीं कर सकती। वहाँ एकत्रित भक्तजनों ने उसका समर्थन किया। एक नारियल तोड़ा गया, मूर्ति की पूजा की गई। एक पुजारिन ने उस लड़के को कुछ द्रव्य पीने को दिया तथा पान का पत्ता खाने को दिया। उस द्रव्य का कुछ भाग मूर्ति पर भी डाला गया। पुजारिन के कहने पर उस लड़के ने उसे चाँदी की एक अँगूठी दी, तथा यह साबित कर दिया कि

वह बलि के लिए पूर्ण रूप से तैयार है। उसने पहाड़ी पर लंबी छलांग लगाई तथा नीचे चट्टान पर गिर कर मृत्यु में लीन हो गया।

ऐसा कहा जाता है कि मान्धाता के राजा ने यह घोषित कर रक्खा था कि बलि चढ़ने के बाद भी यदि कोई व्यक्ति जीवित बच जाता है तो उसे वे स्वयं मान्धाता का राजसिंहासन सौंप देंगे। इस आकर्षण से भी कई लोग बलि चढ़ने के लिए तत्पर रहते थे। पुराने समय में अल्प आयु के लड़कों व लड़कियों को ओंकार भगवान् की सेवा में ले लिया जाता था, तथा उन्हें नरबलि के लिये प्रेरित किया जाता था। ऐसा ही एक अल्पायु बालक १९४० में भगवान् पर चढ़ाया गया था। उस समय लेखक [?] वहीं मान्धाता राज्य के न्यायालय में प्रबन्धक थे।

बालक को गोद लेने की रस्म के पश्चात् उसके माता-पिता को सौंप दिया गया तथा उसे ओंकारसिंह नाम दिया गया। (वह राजपूत था)। वह ३-४ वर्ष तक मंदिर में पला फिर कहीं चला गया। निःसन्तान दम्पति इस वचन के साथ यहाँ प्रार्थना किया करते थे कि वे अपनी प्रथम सन्तान को ओंकार भगवान् को सौंप देंगे। ऐसा भी कहा जाता है वास्तव में राजकीय कूटनीति से नरबलि के लिये चुने गए व्यक्ति को रस्म के अनुसार किसी पेय या मदिरा में ज़हर मिला कर दे दिया जाता था। इन लोगों को ऐसा समझाया जाता था कि यदि वे बच गये तो उन्हें राजसिंहासन मिल जाएगा, और यदि मर गये तो ओंकार भगवान् में लीन हो जाएंगे।

पर्व

यहाँ दो प्रकार के पर्व आयोजित किये जाते हैं - कार्तिक पर्व जो दस दिन चलता है तथा शिवरात्रि पर्व चार दिन के लिए आयोजित किया जाता है। इन पर्वों में अत्यधिक संख्या में श्रद्धालु एकत्रित होते हैं। पुराने समय में भक्तजन बैलगाड़ियों में आते थे, स्वयं अपना भोजन पकाते थे, तीन चार दिन का पड़ाव डालते थे। आधुनिक समय में वे ट्रेन व बसों द्वारा आते हैं। पर्व के प्रमुख दिन व सोमवती अमावास्या के दिन भक्तों की संख्या लाखों में पहुँच जाती है।

नगर की आबादी तेजी से बढ़ रही है। पर्यटकों की संख्या बढ़ने से बाज़ार काफी विकसित हो गए हैं। फिर भी यहाँ पर्यटन विभाग का कोई कार्यालय या प्रतिनिधित्व नहीं है। पुराने अनेक मन्दिरों के जीर्णोद्धार की आवश्यकता है। नर्मदा सागर व ओंकारेश्वर बाँध बनने से नगर का चौमुखी विकास होगा ऐसी संभावना है।



A Contrast of ideals.....The woman thinking of the other world (offering holy prayer waters) and the man still absorbed in this world (grooming)

Mahādeva Shiva Shines In a deep cave Shrine Atop Mahadeo Hills

An extract from *Highlands of Central India*
By Captain James Forsyth. Pp. 172 ff.

Captain James Forsyth, Deputy Commissioner of Nimar, has given us the best account and description of Omkara Mandhata, which he himself visited twice. His presentation is the most authentic, reliable and direct. In his monumental work entitled *Highlands of Central India* he has also presented a unique description of another sacred place of pilgrimage dedicated to Shiva Shaṅkara Mahādeva, not far away from the Mandhata Island. There is a Shivalinga 300 feet deep in a natural cave and he witnessed the congregation of more than forty thousands of pilgrims who had come there to pay their homage. He watched the scene intensely and drew a sketch as well of the entrance to the cave, presented in his book.



We have reproduced it here in our Sourcebook on Omkara Mandhata. The region is called Mahadeo Hills and is shown as such even today in maps of the area. Forsyth has headed this section dealing with this unfamiliar holy place as Mahadeo Hills.

So far we had not come across any description of this holy land in our search and research on Omkara Mandhata. This is a unique place and ought to be studied more by modern scholars. To us it was a kind of revelation.

Here is what Captain Forsyth wrote:

To return to my doings at Puchmurree. Towards the end of February numbers of Hindū pilgrims from the plains to the great shrine of Shiva in the Mahādeo hills began to pass my camp. They usually encamp at the foot of the hill below the shrine; and, besides the road over the plateau, come by a way which leads through the Dīnwā valley below the Puchmurree scarp. Several other roads lead in from the south, all of which are rugged and difficult, and are traversed in fear and trembling by the pilgrims.

About this time I crossed over from Puchmurree to visit the opposite plateau of Motūr which was also at that time under examination as a possible site for a sanitarium in these provinces. The Dīnwā valley lay in between, necessitating a descent and ascent of about 2500 feet each way. On my return from Motūr on the 26th of February I found the little plain in the Dīnwā valley below the shrine, through which my road lay, swarming with the pilgrims, some forty thousand of whom had collected in this lonely valley in a few days, and were now crowding up into the ravine where the cave is situated—a ravine through which a week or two before I had tracked a herd of bison!

Most of these annual gatherings of pilgrims are, to the majority of the Hindūs who attended them, very much what race-meetings and cattle-shows are to the more practical Englishman—an episode in their hard-worked and rather colourless existence, in which a nominal object of little interest in itself is made the excuse for an “outing,” the amusements of which chiefly consist in bothies for the sale of all sorts of miscellaneous articles, universal gossiping for the elders, and peep-shows and whirligigs for the younger members. It is surprising how the familiar features of a fair at home come out, in an oriental costume, at these so-called religious gatherings. The cow with five legs and the performing billy-goat adequately represent the woolly horse and the dancing bear of our childhood. The acrobats are there to the life, tying themselves into identical knots we loved so well. The begging gipsy appears in the fantastic Jogee. Ginger-pop and oranges are even

faintly typified in mhowa grog and sticky sweetmeats. Aunt Sally alone is nowhere: there is nothing at all resembling the uproarious mirth of that ancient lady.

Doubtless at all these gatherings there are a certain number of genuine pilgrims, whose end in coming is the performance of sacred rites at these holy shrines at such holy seasons; for the fairs are all held at times when the worship of the local deity is held to be particularly efficacious. But generally their number is no greater a proportion of the whole than is that of the “members of the ring” in a Derby crowd. Such gatherings usually occur near the large centres of population, where solemn temples crown some sacred eminence by the holy Narbadā. But the gathering at the Mahādeo shrine was of another character from these holiday outings. It draws its multitude into a remote valley surrounded by the “eternal hills” where the Great God has his chiefest dwelling-place in these central regions. No gorgeous temples or impressive ritual attract the sight-seer. The pathways leading to the place are mere tracks, scarcely discernible in the rank jungle, and here and there scaling precipitous rocks, where the feet of countless pilgrims have worn steps in the stone. Young and old have to track out these paths on foot; and all the terrors pestilence, wild beasts, and the demons and spirits of the waste surround the approach in their excited imaginations.

Arrived at the foot of the holy hill, the pilgrim finds neither jollity nor anything more than the barest requirements of existence awaiting him. His food is dry parched grain, his couch the naked earth, during his sojourn in the presence of Mahādeva. Should he be among the first to arrive, the tiger may chance to dispute with him the right to quench his thirst at the watering-place in the Dīnwā river.¹⁹¹ Those who come to a place like this for pleasure must be few indeed.

On my way back to Puchmurree, as I passed through the assembled multitude, many of them were starting, after a dip of purification in the holy stream, to scale the heights that contain the shrine. My way also lay up the pilgrims’ pass; and as I went I passed through numerous groups of them slowly toiling up the steep ascent of nearly two thousand feet. Both men and women formed the throng, the former stripped to the waist and girded with a clean white cloth, the horizontal marks of red and yellow which distinguished them as worshippers of Shiva being newly imprinted on their arms and foreheads. The women retained their usual costume; but the careful veiling of face and figure, attended to on common occasions by high caste ladies, was a good deal relaxed in the excitement of the occasion (and besides, were they not on their way to be absolved of all sin?); and not inconsiderable revelations of the charms of many of the good dames, of light

¹⁹¹ As I went to Motūr on this occasion I saw the track of a tiger where the pilgrims drink. They had not then arrived, of course.

brown skins and jet black eyes, were permitted by the wayward behaviour of their flowing robes as they turned to stare in astonishment at the *sahib* and his strangely-attired attendants pegging away past them up the hill with double-barrelled rifles on their shoulders. All were talking and laughing gaily—now and then shouting out “Jae, Jae, Mahādeo!” (Victory to the Great God). The cry raised by each as he took the first step on the hill was taken up by all the forward groups, till it died away in a confused hum among the crowd who had already reached the shrine, far up in the bowels of the hill. Gloom and terror are the last sentiments in the religious feeling of the Hindū, even when approaching the shrine of the deity who has been called the Destroyer in their trinity of gods. It is considered sufficiently meritorious to perform such a pilgrimage as this at all, without further adding to its misery by wailing and gnashing of teeth. They believe it will do them good, because the priests say so; but they do not think it necessary to weep over it, and “boil their peas” when they can. But at the best it is a hard clamber for those unused to toil. The old and the decrepit, the fat trader, and the delicate high-bred woman, have to halt and rest often and again as they labour up the hill. The path was a zig-zag; and at every turn some convenient stone or rocky ledge had been worn smooth by these restings of generations of pilgrims.

For a long way before the shrine was reached the path was lined on either side by rows of religious mendicants and devotees, spreading before them open cloths to receive alms, clothed in ashes picked out by the white horizontal paint marks of the followers of Shiva, with girdle of twisted rope and long felted locks, hollow-eyed and hideous, jingling a huge pair of iron tongs with movable rings on them, and shouting out the praise of Mahādeva. The clang of a large fine-toned bell and the hum of a multitude of voices reached our ears, as, surmounting the last shoulder of the hill, we entered the narrow valley of the shrine. A long dim aisle, betwixt high redstone cliffs, and canopied by tall mango trees, led up to the cave. The roots of the great mangoes, of wild plantains, and of the sacred *Chumpun*¹⁹² were fixed in the pavement of the rock, worn smooth by the feet of the pilgrims, and moist and slippery with the waters of the stream that issues from the cave.

The cave itself opens through a lofty natural arch in a vertical sand-stone cliff; and for about three hundred feet runs straight into the bowels of the hill. It is without doubt natural; and a considerable stream of clear cold water issues from a cleft at its further end. Here is set up the little conical stone (Lingam) which represents the god, and attracts all these pilgrims once a year. No temple made with hands, no graven image, nothing of the usual pomp and ceremony of Brahmanical worship, adorns this forest shrine. Outside on a platform a Brahman sits chanting

¹⁹² *Michelia Champaca*.

passages in praise of the god, out of the local Shivite gospel (the *Rewā Khaṇḍa*); and a little way off an old woman tolls the great bell at intervals. But within there is no officiating priest, no one but a retainer of the aboriginal chief whose right it has been from time immemorial to act as custodian of the shrine, and to receive the offerings of the pilgrims. No pilgrim ever brings more up the hill with him than he means to offer; for he may take back nothing—his last rupee, and even the ornaments of the women, must be left on the shrine of the god. Before passing into the cave the pilgrim leaves with the Brahmans outside (along with a sufficient *douceur*) his pair of small earthen vessel for the receipt of holy water. These they fill from the stream, seal up, and return to the pilgrim, who then proceeds to make the tour of the holy places on the Mahādeo hills. This takes him the whole of the remainder of the day. At each place a cocoa-nut is offered; and little piles of stones, like children's card houses, are erected at some point of their peregrinations to signify a desire for a mansion in Kailāsa—the heaven of Shiva. Many of the places which should in theory be visited are very inaccessible, such as the top of the Chāoradeo peak, and very few of the pilgrims make the whole round. [Imp. to note].

I sat for some hours in the ravine sketching the entrance to the cave and the picturesque throng about it. A few sulky looks from the professional religionists, and a drawing closer of their garments by the ladies, when they saw my occupation, were all the notice I met with. The bright colouring which gives such a charm to congregations of Hindūs was heightened by the general holiday attire of the worshippers on this occasion; and, in the mellowed light from above, which percolated rather than shone through the canopy of foliage, would have formed a subject worthy of a much better artist than myself. It was hard to believe that all this gay gathering had come in a day, and would go in another, leaving the valley again to bison and the jungle-fowl. Unlike most shrines where such pilgrimages occur, no one remains to look after the god when the pilgrims are gone. The bell is unslung and taken away, being evidently looked upon as the only thing of value in the place. When I first visited the cave I found that the Great god had been better attended to by the wild beasts of the forest than by human worshippers—a panther or hyena having evidently been in the daily habit of leaving the only offering he could make before the shrine!

It is a common idea amongst European that the worship at these Shivite shrines includes rites or mysteries of an obscene character. I believe this to be wholly groundless. No such thing could take place, here at any rate, except in public among a dense crowd; and neither here nor at any other of the many shrines that I have visited have I either seen or heard of such a practice. It is undoubted that the small sects who worship the Shakti, or female power of Shiva, do indulge

in such obscenity. Their unholy rites are not, however, practiced at the public shrines, but in the dark seclusion of their secret meeting places; and their existence I believe is wholly unknown to the great majority even of the ordinary followers of Shiva.

There is one object which will attract attention near shrine of Shiva and which will receive a remarkable explanation. Projecting from the edge of a sheer and lofty cliff above the sacred brook is hung a small white flag. Innocent – looking enough it is; but it marks a spot where, “in the days that are forgotten,” human victims hurled themselves over the rock as sacrifices to the bloody Kālī and Kāla-Bhairava, the consort and son of Shiva the destroyer. The British Government, which cannot be accused of timidity in forbidding so-called religious customs which are contrary to humanity, has long since put a stop to those bloody rites. For centuries, however, they were regular part of the show at these annual pilgrimages, both here and at other principal shrines of Shiva. They are connected with the worship of the terrible mythical developments of the god above mentioned – forms which have, with some probability, been conjectured to be aboriginal deities imported into the Brahminical pantheon.

[Māndhātā]

Far to the west of Puchmuree, in the district of Nimār, is a rocky island in the Narbadā river called Māndhātā, on which is situated the shrine of Shiva called Omkār—one of the oldest and most famous in all India. Like that at Puchmuree, it is situated among rugged hills and jungles; but it has evidently at one time been the seat of a great centre of Shivite worship. Ancient fortifications surmount its scarps; and the area of nearly two square miles enclosed is piled up with the ruins of a thousand gorgeous temples. The most ancient of the temples at which worship is still paid are held by aboriginal Bheels as their custodians, and more recent by a Bhilālā family, who admit their remote derivation from the former. A legend is here current, and based on writings of some antiquity, that Kālī and Kāla Bhairava were here worshipped by the Bheels, long before the worship of Omkār (Shiva) was introduced along with the Rājput adventurer and his attendant priest, who were the ancestors of the present Bhilālā custodian and of the hereditary high priest of Shiva’s shrine. The Rājput is said, by alliance with the Bheels, to have obtained the headship of the tribe; and the holy man who accompanied him, to have stayed by his austerities the ravages of their savage deities, locking Kālī up in a cavern of the hill (and if you do not believe it you may still see the cavern closed up), and vowing to Bhairava an annual sacrifice of human beings.

Listen now to the inducements which the local Shivīte gospel¹⁹³ holds forth to devotees to cast themselves from the rock. "At Omkāṛ-Mādhattā is Kāla Bhairava. Regarding it, Parbatī (wife of Shiva) said unto twenty-five crores of the daughters of the Gandharvas (angels): 'Your nuptials will be with persons who shall have cast themselves over that rock.' Whosoever thus devotes himself to Kāla Bhairava will receive forgiveness, even though he had killed a Brahman. Let the devotee make a figure of the sun on a cloth; and take two flags, a club, and a *chawar*¹⁹⁴ in his hands, and proceed joyously with music to the rock. Whosoever shall bodily cast himself down and die, will be married to Gandharvā. But if he fall faintheartedly, his lot will be in hell. Whosoever turns back again in terror, each step that he takes shall be equivalent to the guilt of killing a Brahman; but who boldly casts himself over, each step that he takes is equal in merit to the performance of a sacrifice. *Let no Brahman cast himself from the rock.* A devotee who has broken his vows, a parricide, or one who has committed incest, shall by thus sacrificing himself become sinless."

In 1822, a European officer of our Government witnessed the death of almost the last victim to Kāla Bhairava at this shrine. The island then belonged to a native State (Sindiā), and our Government had not then begun to interfere with such bloody rites. The political officer who wrote the account of it was therefore unable to prevent it by force. I came on the description a few years ago in MS., hidden away among many other forgotten papers in the Government record room of the Nimār district. The concluding portion may be interesting, as perhaps the only account on record, by an eye-witness, of such an occurrence. After narrating how he vainly urged every argument on the youth to dissuade him from his design, the writer proceeds to relate how he accompanied him to the fatal rock.

"I took care," he says, "to be present at an early hour at the representation of Bhyroo (Bhairava), a rough block of basalt smeared with red paint, before which he must necessarily present and prostrate himself, ere he mounted to the lofty pinnacle whence to spring on the idol. Ere long he arrived, preceded by rude music. He approached the amorphous idol with a light foot, while a wild pleasure marked his countenance. As soon as this subsided, and repeatedly during the painful scene, I addressed myself to him, in the most urgent possible manner, to recede from his rash resolve, pledging myself to ensure him protection and competence for his life. I had taken the precaution to have a boat close at hand, which in five minutes would have transported us beyond the sight of the multitude. In vain I urged him. He now more resolutely replied that it was beyond human power to remove the

¹⁹³ The Narmadā Khaṇḍa, which professes to be a part of Skanda Purāṇa. A more detailed account of the Holy Island and its Shrines, by the author, will be found in the "Central Provinces Gazetteer," second edition .

¹⁹⁴ A yak's tail used for fanning, etc.

sacrifice of the power-ful Bhyroo; evincing the most indomitable determination, and displaying so great an infatuation as even to request me to save him from the fell dagger of the priestess,¹⁹⁵ should he safely alight upon the idol. So deep-rooted a delusion could only be surmounted by force; and to exercise that I was unauthorized. While confronted with the idol, his delusion gained strength; and the barbarous throng cheered with voice and hand, when by his motions he indicated a total and continued disregard of my persuasions to desist. He made his offering of cocoa-nuts, first breaking one; and he emptied into a gourd presented by the priestess his previous collection of pice and cowries. She now tendered to him some ardent spirit in the nut shell, first making her son drink from his hand, to obviate all suspicion of its being drugged. A little was poured in libation to the idol. She hinted to him to deliver to her the silver rings he wore. In doing so he gave a proof of singular collectedness. One of the first he took off he concealed in his mouth till he had presented to her all the rest, when, searching among the surrounding countenances, he pointed to a man to whom he ordered this ring to be given. It was a person who had accompanied him from Oojein. An eagerness was now evinced by several to submit bracelets and even betel-nuts to his sacred touch. He composedly placed such in his mouth and returned them. The priestess at last presented him with a *paan*¹⁹⁶ leaf, and he left the spot with a firm step, amidst the plaudits of the crowd. During the latter half of his ascent he was much concealed from view by shrubs. At length he appeared to the aching sight, and stood in a bold and erect posture upon the fatal eminence. Some short time passed in agitated motions on the stone ledge, tossing now and then his arms aloft as if employed in invocation. At length he ceased; and, in slow motions with both his hands, made farewell salutations to the assembled multitude. This done, he whirled down the cocoa-nut, mirror, knife and lime, which he had continued to hold; and stepping back was lost to view for a moment—a pause that caused the head to swim, the heart to sink, and the flesh to creep. The next second he burst upon our agonised sight in a most manful leap,¹⁹⁷ descending feet foremost with terrific rapidity, till, in mid career, a projecting rock reversed his position, and caused a headlong fall. Instant death followed this descent of ninety feet, and terminated the existence of this youth, whose strength of faith and fortitude would have adorned the noblest cause, and must command admiration when feelings of horror have subsided. Thus closed the truly appalling scene.”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ The priestess here referred to was probably the Bheel custodian of the shrine. There is nothing to prevent the hereditary custodian from having been a female at that time; but *priestess*, properly speaking, have never existed in India. Her receipt of his collections from the people also indicates this conclusion.

¹⁹⁶ The usual signal for the termination of a formal interview.

¹⁹⁷ The place is called the “Bir-Kali” rock, which I believe means literally the “manful leap.”

¹⁹⁸ Extract from a letter of 29th of November, 1822, from Captain Douglas, Political Assistant in Nimār, to the Resident at Indore.

With the exception of the murder of a poor old woman who shrank from the fatal leap when brought to the brink, but was mercilessly pushed over by the excited religionists, this was the last of these sacrifices that was permitted, the country coming in 1824 under our administration.

But the power of evil were not yet to be baulked of their victims. The British Government could prevent deluded and drugged devotees from casting themselves over the Bir-Kali rock; but it could not deprive Kālī and Kāl-Bhairava of their fell executioner—the cholera demon. Year by year the pestilence¹⁹⁹ invaded the encampments of the pilgrims. Sanitary science would say that it arose from the germs of disease brought from the festering gullies of the great cities, and pushed into activity by the exposure, bad food, defiled neighbourhood, and poisoned water, of the pilgrim camps. But the Hindū saw nothing in it but the wrath of the offended Divinity claiming his sacrifice. Year after the year the gatherings were broken up in wild disorder. The valley of the cave, the steep hillside, and that green glade in the Sāl forest, were left to bury their dead, while the multitude fled affrighted over the land, carrying far and wide with them the seeds of death. Everywhere their tracks were marked by unburied corpses; and the remotest villages of the Narbadā valley and the country of the South felt the anger of the destroying fiend.

A pilgrim fleeing from the fatal gathering could find no rest for the sole of his foot. The villages on his road closed their gates against him as if he were a mad dog; and many who escaped the disease perished in the jungle from starvation and wild beasts. At last, after a terrible outbreak of cholera in 1865, the Government prohibited the usual gathering at the Mahādeo Cave. The people made no complaint. They do not seriously care about these things when left alone by the priests; and here the priests were satisfied by the continuance to the hereditary custodians, on whom they were dependent of average income from the pilgrimage, in the form of pension. It is very different when their gains are affected. Two years ago a cholera epidemic threatened in Nimār, and the pilgrimage to Omkār Māndhātā was closed by order. The priests and guardians of the shrine were up in arms at once, basing objections entirely on the money loss they would suffer. Since closing of the Mahādeo pilgrimage the deities of destruction have been baulked of their pay. The valley of the Denvā, although now opened up by a good timber road made to penetrate the Sāl forest, no longer witnesses the annual pilgrim congress. The End

¹⁹⁹ It would be called mahāmāri.

Offerings of Horses to Omkareshvara

The value of a horse in relation to Mandhata

The Imperial Gazetteer of India [a basic reliable source] has presented a very short description of Māndhātā, most of which has been copied by many other writers time and again.

One interesting item, however, which has not yet found its way anywhere else, we believe, is:

It is the practice at the fair to present horses as offerings at the shrine of Śiva; and as the frugal worshippers are inclined to consider that any horse will pass muster for an offering as long as it is alive, it has come to be a proverb, when describing an absolutely worthless horse, to say that it is good enough to be offered at the shrine of Māndhātā [!].

* * *

We observe:

Omkaara Mandhata, a great center of learning

It is quite significant to note that one Māndhātā inscription records the grant of certain villages to the Brahmanas residing at Brahmapurī located on this Māndhātā Parvata Dvīpa itself. There must have lived here a considerable learned population in ancient times. This sacred place must have had a long tradition of being a **dharmakshetra**, a **puṇyabhūmi**. Shankaracharya would not have come here to acquire learning but for this fact and that he would not have found his guru here. Tradition tells us that the **paramaguru** of Shankaracharya, Shri Gauḍapāda too had sanctified this holy place by his stay and tapas.

Kanchi Kamakoti Pitha had announced a very ambitious plan of five crores of rupees to develop this holy land as a great center for study and research on Shankara Bhagavatpāda. It was a big drum making a loud noise, but was hollow inside. Our endless letters of inquiry and requests for cooperation have brought no response from them at all, none whatsoever.

In any case, their interest is quite limited indeed, i.e. to Shankaracharya alone. Nothing wrong in that. But we believe, there should be a general organization to take care of the whole complex—all the temples of all the gods

and goddesses, belonging to all the religions, sects and beliefs, and all the other organizations, existing or operating at present there on Omkara Mandhata island. We visualize a kind of Umbrella organization, a model of **sarva-dharma-samanvaya (samaṣṭi)**. We would call it Omkāra Māndhātā: Group of Devotees – short form OMGOD.

Some significant facts

with regard to the Omkareshwar Temple:

It is unique, unparalleled, unmatched, only one of its kind.

They say: The Nature has carved the original symbolic figure of Om on the rocks! They want us to believe that the island itself is shaped like Om. In other words, the hill/island appears to be of Omkāra-ākāra if seen from above. All this has been a hearsay to us so far. No one, repeat no one, has shown so far anywhere a picture—a true representation of this phenomenon which is claimed to be real. None as yet has given any concrete evidence to prove that it is real. We have been trying for about two years to get one real picture, but without any success. I am prepared to pay any price to acquire it, but none has as yet given any direct concrete evidence. This is disgusting. Conclusion is irresistible that it is not a heresay. It is heresy, making a false propaganda in a divine context.

It is to be remembered and remembered very well that the M P State Tourism Development Corporation itself has indulged in this Mithyā pracāra of telling the world that the Island itself is shaped like Omkāra. Unless they give concrete evidence and prove it, it will be regarded as a white lie.

On the other hand, it seems to us that we have found a satellite view of the mountain top, which features not only Om, but also Allah! Simply unbelievable! Isn't it? But it is there! It can be viewed by anyone by just paying a visit to our holy Om home page at <http://web.missouri.edu/~omshanti>.

The island is not cut into two hills by a ravine to appear as the sacred symbol Om, as it is advertized by some interested money-making machines, but the terrain of the mountain itself has some natural formation like OM [only the “u” part—Om written in Bengal. This was obtained through the continuous effort of Linda Canestraight of the IATS Univ. of Missouri at Columbia. It is not a human creation, but a divine natural formation. What has been publicized and advertized everywhere by all is not shown by anyone else so far. On the other hand, what we have seen so far is not seen or shown by anyone else!



Some more facts to know (in summary)

Shri Omkāreśvara Jyotirlinga of Shiva Shankara Mahadeva is worshipped here on Omkāra Māndhātā Island, a holy hill of hoary antiquity, shaped by the nature itself as the sacred syllable Om [?], and embraced by the pious rivers Narmadā and Kāverī, located in Khandwa District of Madhya Pradesh, India. (22° 14' N. 76° 0' E.)

The River Kāverī joins the Narmadā here to make a girdle round Shiva-purī (another name of the island) and to wash the holy feet of the Vaidūrya Maṇi Parvata (another name of the Hill), worshiped by millions of devotees with full faith and affection since ancient times.

Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga Temple Trust is the official name of the corporate body legally constituted for the management and administration of the Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga Temple. It is the Trustee of the Temple Complex. The rights and privileges acquired by the efforts and investment of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetha of Kancheepuram relating to a cave, temple and some land are owned by another trust created by the efforts of K. K. P. as described above. It is called Kanchi Kamakoti Peetha Seva Trust. I wrote to them time and again for

cooperation and help. But there was no response, none at all. When high and loud drums are being beaten, who is going to hear the tiny tone of a little flute? I did not receive even an acknowledgment to my repeated requests for a copy of the souvenir volume published by the Trust celebrating the 12th centenary of Ādya Shankaracharya. Of course, I was willing to pay the price. I have yet to see that volume as a published book.²⁰⁰ I saw a microfiche produced by the Library of Congress Office in New Delhi, but it is a lousy work. Two important pages are left blank. They say there are colored pictures, but they cannot be seen in the microfiche. I also wrote to one Shri Mahajan, the so-called moving force behind many celebrated activities of the Trust. My letter to him still remains unanswered!

As a result of my incessant efforts in all directions and of every conceivable nature, I got a response from the Chief Executive Officer of Shri Omkareshwar Temple Public Trust (Swami Tej Anand) dated 07/01/2002 to my letter of 21-4-2001 (i. e. after about seven months! Quite prompt! Isn't it?). The book entitled *Adi Sankara at Omkareshwar* too was finally received. If it were ever true that persistence pays, here is evidence. I had been trying to get a copy of this book too for a long time. All the labor was finally rewarded. This book has provided some substantial information to us. It is an official publication to some extent.



²⁰⁰ This was recorded earlier.

We observe:

ADI SHANKARA AT MĀNDHĀTĀ

Jagadguru Ādi Shankaracharya comes all the way on foot from his home in Kerala, trudging the long, dangerous and arduous path at the tender age of only eight in search for his guru. He comes to this holy place and finds his guru Shri Govinda Bhagavadpāda, a place made holier by his paramaguru Shri Gauḍapāda. Shankara gets his *dīkshā* here and learns the Vedas and Shastras-- all the knowledge that is the proudest possession of India, the Bhāratavarṣa.

Notice the miracle performed by this young little lad of eight. The River Narmadā was in full fury of flood. He contains her in his jar--an incident similar to the one when Bhagavān Shankara himself contained the fury and fume of Bhagavatī Bhāgīrathī Gaṅgā in his *jaṭā-jūṭa*. Cf. *Mahimnastava*--*Viyadvyāpī*...

Māndhātā, the famous king of the Solar Race, who had two sons devoted deeply to Lord Viṣṇu, performed a great penance on this island and gratified Shiva. Therefore, this is named after him. [Evidence, even of a Purāṇa is lacking!]

Consider the following facts with special reference to the Shivajyotirlinga there. It is immersed in a **jalakuṇḍa** (pool of water). The water does not overflow, no matter how much is poured therein. Bubbles come out occasionally. They are taken to be the self-satisfaction of the deity. Any offering made (placed in the Kuṇḍa) disappears. It cannot be recovered. The priests there request the devotees to place their offerings into their (of the priests) hands lest they disappear into the bottomless pool of water.

Some more comments : A fairy tale

The island comprises two lofty hills and is divided by a valley in such a way that it appears in the shape of Om from above. [Has anybody seen it from above?] This hearsay not yet authenticated by anyone; only a galpa, i.e. *gappa*. Not a verified fact but an imaginary fiction. Only a myth, not the truth.].

Image of Kālī, Cāmuṇḍā, or Rāvaṇa

On p. 471 the ENG says: Between the Vaishnava and the Jain temples is a stream, now locally called the Ravanānala (Rāvaṇanālā?), after a gigantic statue 18 feet long and ten-armed...Mahākālī. Note the word “long” and “lying.”

However, another writer in Adi Sankara book, as stated above, makes it standing and that of Cāmuṇḍā. But the description makes it Kālī, no doubt. [These two descriptions to be compared]

Note the Gazetteer says “lying.” Here she is described as “standing.” There seems to be a difference in time sequence. Either one description relates to an earlier period or there is a conflict which cannot be easily resolved. What is the condition now? Would it be correct to conclude that the **mūrti** was standing at a time and then fell down, or it had fallen down earlier but then it was raised ? Or the word “standing” may be taken as “not sitting.”

These writers are very vague.

As the facts are: The names Kālī and Cāmuṇḍā refer to the same goddess. The end of chapter seven of the *Devīmāhātmya* or *Durgāsaptāśatī* describes this naming—a kind of honoring. Since Kālī beheaded both Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa [daityas] and presented their heads to Caṇḍikā, the latter said: “Since you have brought to me the heads of both Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa you will be honored in the world as Cāmuṇḍā.”

This matter of the identity of the statue is very well discussed by Forsyth in the Gazetteer as presented by us earlier. He has settled the matter once for all. There is no more any question. There is no more any conflict. We have already presented his contribution in full. *Vāde vāde jāyate tattvabodhaḥ*. The fact remains that it is still under construction! It was never completed.

The legend of Bhairava and Kālī. [More to be brought here].

Some more comments:

The Gita Press of Gorakhpur has published a beautiful book on the 12 Jyotirlingas. It has charming illustrations and is well produced in keeping with the wonderful tradition of the Press. I tried my best to get a copy of this book, but without any success for a long time. Finally I got it, thanks to Chaukhamba.

However, anyone who has read the book *Shiva tattva darshana* by Shri Ramaprasada Sharma Shastri of Khetdi will clearly see that the Gita Press publication has stolen quite a good deal [rather a bad deal] from the book by Sharma. There is no acknowledgement at all. It is plain plagiarism. A pitiable piracy. It is painful. It is very sad. It is very bad. It is a dirty deed indeed.

Internet has a great deal of information and articles on so many other jyotirlingas, but much more has been written on this Jyotirlinga at Māndhātā than any other jyotirlinga in the whole of India.

Mucukunda. Forsyth says that a specific part (area) on the top of the Mount Mandhata is called Mucukunda, who, by the way, according to Sankalia, built a parikhā around Mahishmati. But these two are not identical by parentage.

Gurla Mandhata

The following information is drawn from Balfour's Encyclopedia. Gurla Mandhata, however, is not associated with Omkara-Mandhata. We are drawn by the name.

MANDHATA. Gurla Mandhata, also called Nimo Namail, lies ten miles south of Lake Manasarovara. According to the legend told by the Milam Bhotia, the great mountain is the transformation of the holy body of a raja of Banaras of the name of Mandhata, who is said to have died some thousands of years ago on the shores of the Manasarovara Lake while on a pilgrimage to its waters. Another notable peak is Kailasa; it lies to the north of Manasarovara, and being in the shape of a Hindu temple is greatly venerated by all the Hindus of Northern India. 'Owing to its immense bulk and height,' says Mr. Ryall, '3000 feet above any within a radius of 40 miles, it is perhaps the most impressive sight on the Himalayas; the celebrated mountain Nanga Parbat, N.W. of Kashmir, alone excepted.'

Below is given the response of a generous Reference Librarian of the Ellis Library:

Mr. Nagar:

[Even] After much searching, I haven't found a definition of "Gurla", although I now know the name of Gurla Mandhata translated into Tibetan. I checked dictionaries geology, geography, mountaineering, books on mountain expeditions to the Himalayas, databases such as bibliography of Asian studies, Georef, Geobase, hints at the meaning was an article that said Gurla Mandhata means "Mountain of Black Herbal Medicine" ["Honeymoon in Tibet", "Women's sports and fitness." (5/15/ 96)].

Appendix

Forwarding a typed copy of Forsyth's valuable "Report", Swami Tej Ananda said:

There are no historical writings about Omkareshwar of old. The British attempted to write a Note on Omkareshwar in about 1857 or so, but the second edition of 1870 is brief and more useful. I am sending a typed copy of the same separately.

Swamiji then gives some information re. a film on Adi Shankar produced by a firm in Bangalore. It gives a topographical picture of the Narmada Ghat only and not a birds' eye view of the top surface of the island to show the Om Shape. The Swami continues:

The island is roughly 2 miles long and a mile wide somewhat like an egg [Is this not symbolic?] but having its backside larger [?] than the front arriving it in such a way as to give the island Om shape [not clear to me at all]

With regard to my desire to have an aerial view of the island, the Swami says:

To get an aerial picture a helicopter will have to be hired from Indore to be accompanied by a hired and expert photographer. This will cost too much. The best time will be September or October when the hill is green.

I wrote him back and tried to find out how much would it really cost. His reply is still awaited!

Some valuable references

Art, archaeology and literature in Central India. Nagpur University Lib. has given many references under this title. This reference book gives many citations from East Nimar District Gazetteer.

Medieval statues of Brahmanical gods and goddesses discovered.
Source: Indian archaeology: a review, 1961-62, p. 99.

Dr. C. P. Ramasesh, Deputy Librarian, Mysore University Library says:

Tattvāloka for the years 1992, 1993, and 1994

contain articles on Omkareshvara. I got all of them. I scanned them, but I did not find any material pertaining my field of study, especially Shankaracharya at Omkara Mandhata. There was something on Shankara Bhagavadpāda, but not on the Mount Mandhata. Someone should try again.

Extensive search to be made for all cumulative indices, if any, for all Indological journals.

A list of such journals to be compiled. For example, Indian historical quarterly.

Coins honoring Omkara.

A special one page inquiry had been prepared for coins honoring Omkara. A copy was sent to Nagpur. Dr. Kumar had acknowledged it.

Was sent to all the museums in India. Result zero.

Bajpai, K D Madhya Pradesh kā purātattva. Bhopal, 1970. LCCN 75905482

Corpus Inscriptum Indicarum

Cousen's List of Antiquarian Remains in C. P. and Berar

Cunningham's Archaeological Survey of India Reports. 1-23

Dikshit, M. G. Madhya Pradesh ke Purātattva kī rūparekhā

Dwivedi, H. N. Madhya Bharat ka itihasa. Gwalior.1956

Hira Lal : Inscriptions in C. P. and Berar

Rahman Ali, Temples of Madhya Pradesh. New Delhi: Sundeep, 2002. xx, 203 p.
Illus. ISBN 81-7574-120-1

Sankalia, H. D. Excavations at Maheshwar and....

Sharma, R. K. Madhya Pradesh ke purātattva kā sandarbha grantha. Bhopal, 1974.

Encyclopedia Indica. 1997. (Ref. Received from Nagpur)

Says: under Omkāranātha: “This temple is the oldest of Śiva temples” and
gives ref. to Caine’s *Picturesque India*, p. 307.

Forsyth on Mandhata In Gazetteer of the C. P.

Indian archaeology: a review

Om : One God Universal

This kind of extensive search to be made for all cumulative indices, if any, for all Indological journals.

A list of such journals to be compiled. For example, Indian historical quarterly.

References for Mandhata in

Archaeological Survey of India Circle Reports:
[Provided by Hingorani in his book on Sites.

E 07-08:27-28

E 11-12:41-42

W 03-04:20

W 04-05:11

W 04-05:25

W 92:93:3-4

W 93-94:3-4

A thorough search is to be made to find all the above writings.
If reading material found, a xerox copy to be made

The compiler Hingorani tells us that he had to travel all over India and visit many libraries to compile his Index. There may not be any library in the whole of India that might have all the needed volumes.

Search needed for Nivvui Kandani, a source for Jain tirthas, cited in connection with Siddhavarakūṭa.

Henry Cousens says that the Shivalinga at Omkareshvara is a kind of natural bursting of the rock. Find the exact quotation.

But we are also told that it is always merged in water.

Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, vol. 28, pp. 1-8. Borrow ILL

See Decennial Index to Index India once again.

See Archaeological Survey of India Annual Reports Index for the Temple of Siddheshvara at Mount Mandhata.

Sankalia has given reference to Indian antiquary, 1896, pp. 53-56. Seen. Of no consequence. Check again.

See once again: Indian antiquary, vol. 20, pp. 310-16.

Imperial gazetteer of India: provincial series.
New Delhi: Usha, 1984-<1985 >

Mani, Vettam
Māndhātā, The Great Emperor
Puranic encyclopedia.

Chudhuri [?] Sibdas.
Index to the New Indian antiquary, Bombay, 1938-1947.
Calcutta: Asian Documentation, 1977.
Abhorrent in physical format.



Hellish havoc hurled at holy temples by Heartless Iconoclasts

Captain James Forsyth says:

The old temples about Māndhātā have all suffered greatly from the bigotry of the Mohammedans who ruled the country from about A. D. 1400. Every old dome is overthrown, and not a single figure of a god or animal is to be found un mutilated. The fanatic Alā-ud-dīn passed through the country in A.D. 1295 on his return from his Deccan raid, and as he took Asīrgarh which is not far off, it is improbable that he would have passed over so tempting an idol preserve as Māndhātā. Doubtless the work commenced by him was continued by the Ghorī princes of Malwa, and completed by that arch iconoclast Aurangzeb.

Yet much remains among the ruins which must be highly interesting to the archaeologist. [emphasis added] Both the hills are covered with remnants of habitations built in stone without cement. The walls of the different forts, two of which enclose the two sections of the island itself, and two more the rocky eminences of the southern banks, display some excellent specimens of the old style of Hindu architecture. They are formed of very large blocks of stone without cement. The stone is partly the basalt of the hill itself, and partly a coarse yellow sandstone which must have been brought from a considerable distance.

Pasricha makes some sensible statements for a change:

Another important temple on the island is the “Gorī [Gaurī] Soma-nātha” temple. It has a gigantic “Liṅga” of smooth black stone and a “Nandī” of the same stone is outside. It is a three-storeyed building, elaborately carved with beautiful sculptures. The temple is in good shape and the hillock around is strewn with beautiful sculptures of various sizes. [Imp. to note]

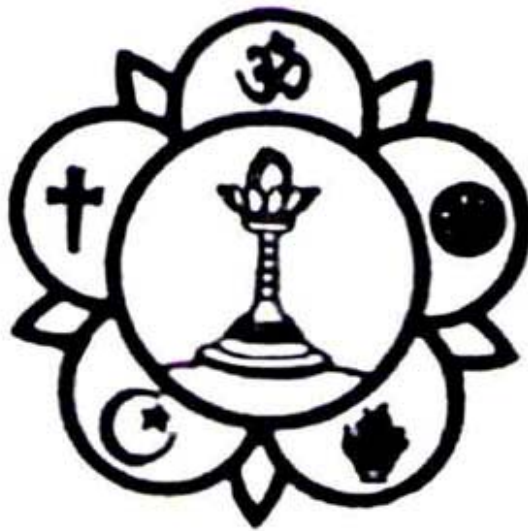
[Cf. The one at Maheshvara.]

In the nooks and corners around the temple and on stairways and parapets lie beautiful sculptures throbbing with life, unattended, and none, alas, will ever know who created them. [Noteworthy statement. Will they stay there forever?]

WE NEED A MUSEUM OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY ON MOUNT MANDHATA RIGHT NOW AND HERE!!]

The whole complex of temples on the island and on the southern and northern banks of Narmadā remain unstudied by scholars. They are lying there neglected and the possibility of valuable sculptures having been removed cannot be ruled out. [Emphasis added].

? I Question the above statement about remains lying around unstudied, collected together yes, to much to study, needing more study.



To Swami Tej Anand

Venerable Svamiji:

May 25, 2001

I hope you received all the “papers” etc. that I had sent to you. I have not yet received any response from you with regard to my requests for cooperation. May be you are too busy in your own affairs, but **this work too is equally yours.**

In the meantime, I have received a dozen copies of your “Darshanika.” It gives some useful information.

Also I saw your home page. It is good. I sent an e-mail, but I have not yet received any response from your end.

I would like to include your pictures into my proposed publication. Would it be possible to get good prints of large size? I will pay the price.

Also I need an aerial picture (several shots) of the Island showing its shape of Om. There are dozens of descriptions of the Island on the Internet. All say that it looks like Om from above. But none gives a real picture. I am prepared to pay any reasonable **predetermined** price. Please let me know if it is possible. How to go about it? How much would it cost? You have all the resources. **It will serve your own purpose too equally well.**

I hope I get a satisfactory response from you soon.

Sincerely yours,

Murarilal Nagar

I did not receive anything from that Rao (Raja of Mandhata) either, not even an acknowledgment, but the Svami sent a copy of Adi Sankara Book and the contribution (essay, write up) by Forsyth.

Swami Tej Ananda said:

There are no historical writings about Omkareshwar of old. The British attempted to write a Note on Omkareshwar in about 1857 or so, but the second edition of 1870 is brief and more useful. I am sending a typed copy of the same separately.

Swamiji then gives some information re. a film on Adi Shankar produced by a firm in Bangalore. It gives a topographical picture of the Narmada Ghat only and not a birds' eye view of the top surface of the island to show the Om Shape. [All this is repetitive and vague statement.] The Swami continues:

The island is roughly 2 miles long and a mile wide somewhat like an egg [Is this not symbolic?] but having its back side larger [?] than the front. A rivine [?] it in such a way to give the island Om shape [not clear to me at all]

* * * * *

This is only a note for any future researcher if he comes at all to continue our work on Omkara Mandhata. The following work deals with the exploits—work and works of Mandhata, Muchukunda and Ambarisha in Rajputana.

Archaeological Survey of India. Report of a tour in Eastern Rajputana in 1871-72 and 1872-73 by A. C. L. Carlleyle, Assistant, Archaeological Survey, under the superintendence of Major-General A. Cunningham. Vol. 6. Calcutta, 1878. Pp. 162 ff. “Nāgar or Nāgara or Karkota Nāgara.”

This is a very interesting account, but not directly related to our main subject of study here, Omkara Mandhata. One cannot do everything. There are always limitations for a HUMAN being. **Na hyekākī eka eve janaḥ sarvam kāryajātam samam eva kartum samarthah. [Our own nyāya]**

An extract from Captain James Forsyth, an Englishman:

[Remains to be preserved and served]

The old temples about Māndhātā have all suffered greatly from the bigotry of the Mohammedans who ruled the country from about A. D. 1400. Every old dome is overthrown, and not a single figure of a god or animal is to be found unmutilated. The fanatic Alā-ud-dīn passed through the country in A.D. 1295 on his return from his Deccan raid, and as he took Asīrgarh which is not far off, it is improbable that he would have passed over so tempting an idol preserve as Māndhātā. Doubtless the work commenced by him was continued by the Ghorī princes of Malwa, and completed by that arch iconoclast Aurangzeb.

Yet much remains among the ruins which must be highly interesting to the archaeologist. [emphasis added] Both the hills are covered with remnants of habitations built in stone without cement. The walls of the different forts, two of which enclose the two sections of the island itself, and two more the rocky eminences of the southern banks, display some excellent specimens of the old style of Hindu architecture. They are formed of very large blocks of stone without cement. The stone is partly the basalt of the hill itself, and partly a coarse yellow sandstone which must have been brought from a considerable distance.

Another important temple on the island is the “Gorī [Gaurī] Somanātha” temple. It has a gigantic “Līṅga” of smooth black stone and a “Nandī” of the same stone is outside²⁰¹. It is a three-storeyed building, elaborately carved with beautiful sculptures. The temple is in good shape and the hillock around is strewn with beautiful sculptures of various sizes. [Imp. to note] Pasricha.

In the nooks and corners around the temple and on stairways and parapets lie beautiful sculptures throbbing with life, unattended, and none, alas, will ever know who created them.

Pasricha has made a noteworthy statement here. Our question is : Will they stay there for ever?

WE NEED A MUSEUM OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY ON MOUNT MANDHATA!!]

We searched the whole of Padma Purāṇa to locate some relevant text. All that we found in the Index is reproduced below:

²⁰¹ Up or down?

Padma Purāṇa I.11.8 20 (MLBD Eng. Tr. p. 97) says:

“Omkāra is (another) place sacred to the manes; so also Kāverī and Kapilodaka.” [Kapilā? Kapiladhārā?]

And here is what we found resembling the original:

ॐकारं पितृतीर्थं तु कावेरीकपिलोदकम् ।
संभेदश्चण्डवेगायां तथैवामरकण्टकम् ॥ २० ॥
कुरुक्षेत्राच्च द्विगुणं तस्मिन् स्नानादिकं भवेत् ॥ २१ ॥ पूर्वार्धं ॥

To read “Kāverī and Kapilodaka” as two distinct entities does not seem to be palatable to us at all. So we have joined the two. One of us is wrong. Both cannot be right. Truth is one.

In any case this is very little. They say: Padma Purāṇa says this. Padma Purāṇa says that. We did not find much. There is a great deal of **Bimbapratibimbabhāva** in this Purāṇa and Skanda. May be there is more somewhere else in the same Purāṇa in the same or in some other ed. Probably a writer has stated without giving any reference or authority that the Padma Purāṇa names Omkāra Māndhātā as Vaidūrya maṇi Parvata. We did not find it. This is like saying: Bhagavān Shrī Kṛṣṇa ne Gītā mem kahā hai. Everything goes like that. My grandmother said like that. Who is going to verify? And how?

Searching the Puranas for something useful for our study is like searching the needle in a haystack. This has been a very sad experience.

The above statement reminds us:

कुरुक्षेत्रे प्रयागे च गङ्गासागरसङ्गमे ।
स्नात्वा कनखले तीर्थे पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥

Here Kurukshetra leads the above list. And yet we are assured of the double benefit by having bath, etc. in Omkāratīrtha. What a glorious holy place!

* * *
On Paṭṭaśālā--

To translate the word “paṭṭaśālā” as “clothhouse” or “tenthouse” is a display of abject poverty of language. It is trifling. It is shallow. It is disgusting.

The Brāhmaṇas were worthy of the greatest honor to be given even by the kings. For example, the king had to come down of his vehicle if a Brāhmaṇa was found coming on foot from the other side of the road.

“Paṭṭa” also means royal grant or edict. The word “Paṭṭaśālā” could very well mean a residential building created by royal decree. It should not be interpreted as “Tent House” or a House of Cloth. This will be called Makshikāsthāne Makshikā. In this connection the word “paṭṭakila” also is to be taken into consideration. Both occur in the same grant. This word means the ‘tenant of a piece of land by royal edict.’ Cf. Paṭṭamahīṣī.

Paṭṭaśiṣya is not made of cloth! It means the prime, major or favorite disciple.

* * *

The Paramāra kings worshipped Shiva and Vishnu both. Their royal emblem engraved on their copper plate grants was Garuḍa!

* * *

What follows is not connected.

With reference to Ambarīṣa:

Cf. Mānārtham Ambarīṣasya tathaiva munisimhayoḥ.
Rāmo Dāśarthir bhūtvā nātmavedīva so’bhavat.

Appears in our edn. of the *Ratnākara*. We have traced it to *Līṅgapurāṇa*.



We have yet to study Maṇḍaleśvara.

[Māhishmatī smārikā has a great deal of information.]

Some stray notes taken from various sources

Jyotirlinga may mean self-effulgent, luminous image of Shiva in the form of a *linga*.

The God therein is also named as Māndhātā Omkāreśvara.

Moratakka and Omkareshwar Road railway stations are identical.

It is said that until the appearance of this specific railway line, the access to the Temple Complex was through Barhwa [Baḍavāhā ot Baḍavāha. This matter of railway line needs a good deal of study, search, and research as to the access to the mountain.

Some writers say Khandwa Tehsil. Others say Khandwa District. The Gazetteer published in 1969 says East Nimar District.

The East Nimar District Gazetteer has numerous references under which Mandhata is described.

The island is roughly 4 kms. long and 2 kms. wide. It is about 450 to 500 feet above the encircling waters. It is also called Vaidūrya Maṇi Parvata in the Puranas.²⁰²

They say: The island comprises two lofty hills and is divided by a valley in such a way that it appears in the shape of Om from above. Has anybody ever seen it from above? This hearsay not yet authenticated by anyone; only a galpa, i.e. *gappa*. Not a verified fact, but an imaginary fiction. Only a myth, not the truth.

The newly constructed (1979) cantilever bridge is 270 feet above the water level of Narmada. That means the main settlements (habitations) on both sides of the river (or the easily accessible parts) are that much higher from the water level. [Most of what we are writing here as the ‘Notes’ needs verification by direct

²⁰² A very vague statement. Almost meaningless.

observation. At the moment they are only suppositions or inferences. They possess no authenticity.]

We have not yet found any ancient literary record, even Epic or Puranic, where Chakravarti Samrāṭ Māndhātā was found directly associated with this Māndhātā Parvata Dvīpa, which was also called Śivapurī, besides being named as Vaidūryamaṇi parvata. [This was written long ago before the day of enlightenment had dawned.]

Nivvui Kandani,²⁰³ source cited by ENG for Siddhavarakūṭa,

The following Puranas are to be explored:

1. Agni
2. Kūrma
3. Linga
4. Matsya
5. Padma
6. Shiva
7. Vishnu
8. Skanda especially Reva Khanda. Seen with good results
9. Skanda Kashi Khanda

Nos. 1 to 4. Some eds. are in Ellis. Seen. No gain. Without proper index and or contents analysis (detailed) it is like searching the needle in a haystack.

#5. MLBD tr. ed. seen. No gain.

#6. We have at home. Seen.

#8.

#9 Yet to be seen.

²⁰³ We wrote to a Jaina research organization, named probably as Devakumara Jain Research Institute, Arrah, Bihar. But no response at all. Maybe our letter went straight into their waste paper basket.

Some final notes

If the līṅga at the Omkareshvara Temple is **prākṛtika** and **svayambhū** and the līṅga at Amareshvara **kṛtrima** and man-made, it should settle the controversy once for all whether there is only one jyotirlinga or two.

Māndhātā (22° 14' N 76° 17' E)—Exact location

Appendix

Man grows in knowledge as he grows in age provided he remains active and keeps his eyes open. On page 86 of our current book on Omkara Mandhata appears the following statement:

[We have not yet seen any documentary evidence [even from a Purāṇa] to this hearsay. Vettam Mani in his *Puranic Encyclopedia* gives a great deal of information about this famous king Māndhātā, supported by Puranic references, but he does not relate this island in any way with Cakravarti Samrāt Māndhātā of the solar race.]

[Also earlier we had stated as follows:

We have not yet found any ancient literary record, even Epic or Puranic, where Chakravarti Samrāt Māndhātā was found directly associated with this Māndhātā Parvata Dvīpa, which was also called Śivapurī, besides being named as Vaidūryamaṇi parvata.]

Today on April 4, 2004 we declare most emphatically: This is an old statement. Now we have found many Puranic references through the kind courtesy of J. F. Fleet and F. E. Pargiter. Ref. JRAS. As far as Sankalia is concerned we would venture to say with all due respect that his performance at least in this respect was **paśyannapi na paśyati**.

Earlier on page 82 we had stated as follows:

We believe: The sources and resources available to Sankalia were limited indeed as far as Māndhātā is concerned. His main attraction was Maheshvara. He used all his power of argumentation to deny the identification of Mandhata with ancient Mahishmati. Anyone who goes through what is presented in this Sourcebook shall be convinced of this reality. This fact gives us some real satisfaction that we have rendered some substantial service to the world of learning. We can only hope and pray that some impartial true scholar will get inspired by our work and would continue it.

We observed reticence in deference to the vast scholarship of Sankalia. But now we find that Sankalia's approach was unscholarly and unacademic to say the least. He wrote in the middle of 20th century. He has referred to the

respectable name and statement of J. F. Fleet, who wrote as early as 1910 in JRAS, pp. 440-47. We saw this only now (March 2004). What Sankalia concluded was only *gajanimīlikā*. Cakravarti Samrat Mahan Mandhata was one and the same with reference to both Maheshvara and Mandhata. And Muchukunda too was one and the same who built Omkara Mandhata as well as Mahishmati. While denying this fact Sankalia betrayed either his lack of knowledge or simple obstinacy.

Because on page 81 of our Sourcebook we had concluded:

It is to be remembered in this connection that Muchukunda was one of the two sons of the Great King Māndhātā, highly devoted to Bhagavān Viṣṇu. Another son was Ambarīsha, equally devoted to Lord Viṣṇu, whose story regarding Shrīmatī, the Princess is narrated in *Liṅgapurāṇa*--Nārada-Parvata-muni-yugala-vyāmoha.

But we have found that Muchukunda of Sankalia is different by parentage. This matter needs a great deal of search and research. Maybe some day someone would do this “Utkhanana.”

This is a case of “Blind leading the blind.” Sankalia must have seen the learned paper of Fleet to refute his findings. We are not sure if Sankalia paid any attention to the following statement of Fleet appearing on page 442 and reading as follows:

“The city is also mentioned in the Harivaṃśa. We are there told in one place (1846-7) that it was founded by king Mahishmat, the heir (*dāyāda*) of Sahañja who was descended from Yadu through Haihaya:²⁰⁴ but in another passage that the founder of it was king Muchukunda. This last mentioned person is there treated as a son of Yadu: but elsewhere in the same work (711-14, 6464) he is mentioned as a son of Māndhātṛi.”²⁰⁵

Now we say this and most emphatically too that Sankalia led us astray. We are not sure knowingly or unknowingly.

Sankalia has indulged in great **vitandāvāda** in trying to prove that Māndhātā is not Māhishmatī. In this connection we would like to draw the kind

²⁰⁴ On the descent compare Viṣṇu Purāṇa, translation, 4. 53 f.

²⁰⁵ So also in Viṣṇu Purāṇa, translation, 3.268.

attention of our readers to the following statement made by us on pages 144-45 of our current study.

On p. 182 Trivedi presents the text of the grant. The following are some significant statements in the original: माहिष्मतीस्थितैरस्माभिः ... रेवायां स्नात्वा श्रीदैत्यसूदनसन्निधौ भगवन्तं भवानीपतिं समभ्यर्च्य ...

And in fn. 7 he says: This appears to refer to the image of Vishṇu installed in an old temple in the vicinity of the well-known temple at Mandhata.

[We might add here inter alia that Trivedi overlooks the fact that Amareshvara was the kuladevatā of the Paramāra kings. And a part of the Southern Mandhata (SW) is named even today as Vishṇupurī. There is a great temple there dedicated to Lord Vishṇu. This king did not have to worship Omkareshvara and an insignificant mūrti of Bhagavān Vishṇu on the Mount Mandhata. The north and south Māndhātā were separated by a mighty river Narmadā!]

It is to be remembered here that according to Sankalia and company Māhiṣmatī and Māndhātā are not identical.²⁰⁶ They are about 38 miles apart. Did the king stay at Māhiṣmatī and then take bath at Māndhātā and then donate the village after taking bath at Māndhātā? All this is not clear to us at all. This subject needs further exploration.

This was stated earlier. Maybe we have to conclude now that notwithstanding all the heavy arguments of Sankalia and company “Māhiṣmatī” included Māndhātā as well!

Here is an extract from the *West Nimar District Gazetteer* [p. ?]:

Regarding the exact location and identification of Mahishmati, there is a great deal of controversy. Although some of the historians have equated Omkara Mandhata of East Nimar District with Mahishmati

***fn 7. Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa (Bibliotheca Indica)’ 1914, p.333 and footnote; Fleet, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1910, pp. 440-47; V.V.Mirashi,

²⁰⁶ On the other hand, some scholars argue that both are identical.

Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, vol IV, pt. I, p.xliv (44); Indian Antiquary, 1876, p. 53

the evidence seems to be overwhelmingly in favour of its identification with Maheshwar in West Nimar District. This identification finds support in the writings of a number of scholars.

Here is a long quote from Fleet JRAS, p. 444 ff.:

Mr. Pargiter has drawn attention to two instructive documents about Mahishmatī.²⁰⁷ One is in the Raghuvamśa, in the account of the *svayaṃvara* of Indumatī. When the chief portress, who introduces the various suitors, comes to Pratīpa, the king of Anūpa, a descendant of the thousand-armed Kārtavīrya, she says (6.43):--“Be thou the Lakshmī on the lap of this long-armed (king) if thou dost wish to see through the windows of (his) palace the Revā (Narbadā) charming with rippling waters, which is a girdle round the hip-like ramparts of (his city) Māhishmatī.” As Mr. Pargiter has observed, this distinctly locates Māhishmatī, not on the Narbadā but in the middle of it; that is, on a island in it. The other statement is in the Harivaṃśa, in the passage (5218-27) which narrates the founding of the city by Muchukunda. His father had expressed the desire (5211) that he should found two cities against the mountains Vindhya and Rikshavat, in the shelter of the hills. Accordingly, he first made a settlement on the bank of the Narbadā, at a place full of rough rocks, which he cleared and adorned with a bridge, moats, temples, streets and groves; and he then made Māhishmatī, at the feet of the two mountains Vindhya and Rikshavat, and also a second city, Purīkā, on the bank towards the Rikshavat.

Mr. Pagiter has pointed out that this latter passage marks a locality on the Narbadā where the Vindhya and Sātpurā (Sātpuḍā) ranges contract the valley, and come close to the river; that Mahishwar does not satisfy the conditions of either of the two statements;²⁰⁸ and that the place which does satisfy them is the rocky island and village of Māndhātā, now sacred to Śiva, and containing a famous shrine of him as Omkāranātha, about thirty-five or forty miles higher up the river. And he has accordingly located Māhishmatī there; a conclusion which we heartily endorse.

²⁰⁷ See his translation of the Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa, p. 333, note [?] (issued in 1896), and introd., p. 9 (1905).

²⁰⁸ There is no inhabited island there; and the hills do not close in to the river. Moreover, the place does not seem to have any remains suggestive of antiquity.

This island-village of Māndhātā, belonging to the Khandwā Tahsil of the Nimār District, Central Provinces, is shown in the Indian Atlas sheet No. 53, S. W. (1891), as ‘Mandhatha’ with also the name ‘Unkarnath’ attached in more conspicuous type, in lat. 22 15’, long. 76 12’, six miles east of ‘Barwai’ and seven miles east-north-east of ‘Mortakka’, stations on the Rājputānā-Mālwa section of the Rājputānā-Mālwa railway. And the map shows clearly how spurs of the Vindhya and Sātpurā ranges come close up to it. In addition to satisfying the conditions of Raghuvamśa and the Harivamśa, it answers just as well as does Maheshwar to the statement in the Suttanipāta being only about thirty miles to the east from the straight line between Paiṭhan and Ujjain, at a distance of closely about 195 miles from the former place and 70 miles from the latter. It answers to Patañjali’s indication that the distance between Ujjain and Māhishmatī, though appreciable, could be covered, as a special feat, in one night. It is distinctly referable to Southern India whether we take the Vindhya mountain or the Narbadā as the dividing-line between the north and the south. Its present name is well accounted for by the mention of Māndhātṛ as the father of Muchukunda in one of the versions of the parentage of the latter. And we may locate Purikā, the second city attributed to Muchukunda on an open area, on the south of the island, where the map shows villages named Godurpoora, Bainpoora, Bamunpoora [Brahmapurī] and Dhooka,²⁰⁹ and may probably place Muchukunda’s preliminary settlement (on the north bank) on the east of the island, where the map shows two villages and ‘Jain Temples’. It may be added that the Imperial Gazetteer tells us (17.152) that the village of Māndhātā stands partly on the island, partly on the south bank of the river, and ---a detail in which the place still answers to the words of Kālidāsa---that on the island it includes rows of houses, shops and temples, with “the Rao’s palace conspicuous above the rest,” standing on terraces scraped out of a hill: also, that “upon the summit of the hill are signs of a once flourishing settlement, in the shape of ruined fortifications and temples.”

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In short, then, we locate the Mahishamaṇḍala, “the territory of the Mahishas”, to which Moggaliputta –Tissa sent one of his Buddhist missions in the time of Aśoka, by recognizing it as the country of which the capital was Māhishmatī. We agree with Mr. Pargiter in placing Māhishmatī on the island in

²⁰⁹ A town Purikā is mentioned in some of the inscriptions at Bharhut [?], *Ind. Ant.*, 21, 234, No. 83; 236, Nos. 117-9.

the Narbadā which is now known as Māndhātā. And we thus find in the Mahishamaṇḍala a border-land of the Buddhist Middle Country.

Looking to the general features of the country as shown in the Atlas sheets, we may probably take it that the territory belonging to the Māhishmatī lay on both sides of the Narbadā, and extended on the west far enough to include Maheshwar; in short, that it consisted of the present Nimār Zillah of Indore with part of the Nimār District of the Central Provinces. This would help to account for any transfer of the name and traditions of Māhishmatī along with the Māhishmatī-Māhātmya to Maheshwa; a transfer which, if established, may be instructive in some other cases. It would also help to explain the mention of Māhishmatī as a city of the Avantis, the people of Ujjain, in the Dīgha-Nikāya (see this Journal, 1907, 653): it may easily be the case that the Ujjain territory was sometimes bounded on the south by the Vindhya range, but sometimes reached as far as the Narbadā.

[Here ends the learned contribution of Fleet.]

Here are some extracts from Harivamsha, Khila, Poona ed. Vol. 2:

प्रथमं परिशिष्टम्, No. 18. p, 80 :

स तासु नागकन्यासु कालेन महता नृपः [यदुः] | [line 142]

जनयामास विक्रान्तान् पञ्च पुत्रान् कुलोद्वहान् || [143]

मुचुकुन्दं महाबाहुं [144]

विन्ध्यर्क्षवन्तावभितो द्वे पुर्यौ पर्वताश्रये ।

निवेशयत्वयं तावन्मुचुकुन्दः सुतो मम ॥ [line 155]

* * *

मुचुकुन्दस्तु राजर्षिर्विन्ध्यमध्ये व्यरोचत ।

स्वस्थानं नर्मदातीरे दारुणोपलसंकटे ॥

स तु तं शोधयामास विविक्ते विचचार ह । [170]

सेतुं चैव समं चक्रे परिखाश्रामितोदकाः ॥

स्थापयामास भागेषु देवतायतनानि च ।

रथ्या वीथ्यो नृणां मार्गाश्चत्वरणि गृहाणि च ॥

स तां पुरीं धनवतीं पुरुहूतपुरीप्रभाम् ।

नातिदीर्घेन कालेन चकार नृपसत्तमः ॥ [175]
 नाम चास्याः शुभं चक्रे निर्मितं स्वेन तेजसा ।
 तस्या पुर्या नृपश्रेष्ठो देवश्रेष्ठपराक्रमः ॥
 महाश्मसंघातवती ऋक्षवन्तमुपाश्रिता ।
 माहिष्मती [!] नाम पुरी प्रकाशमुपयास्यति ॥
 उभाभ्यामृक्षपादाभ्यां पर्वताभ्यां महापुरीम् । [180]
 मध्ये निवेशयामास श्रिया परमया वृताम् ॥
 पुरिकां नाम धर्मात्मा पुरीं देवपुरीप्रभाम् ।
 उद्यानाम्रवणोपेतां समृद्धापणचत्वराम् ॥
 स ते द्वे विपुले पुर्यौ राजपुर्युपमे शुभे ।
 पालयामास धर्मात्मा राजा धर्मेण वीर्यवान् ॥ [185]

एवमिक्ष्वाकुवंशात्तु यदुवंशो विनिःसृतः । [218]
 चतुर्धा यदुपुत्रैस्तु चतुर्भिर्भिद्यते पुनः॥

हरिवंशे हरिवंशपर्व इक्ष्वाकुवंशः (Poona ed. p. 76.9 V.1.

तस्याः पुत्रो महानासीद्युवनाश्वो नराधिपः ।
 मान्धाता युवनाश्वस्य त्रिलोकविजयी नृपः ॥ 83 ॥
 तस्य चैत्ररथी भार्या शशबिन्दोः सुताभवत् ।
 साध्वी बिन्दुमती नाम रूपेणासदृशी भुवि ॥
 पतिव्रता च ज्येष्ठा च भ्रातृणामयुतस्य सा ॥ 84 ॥ (sic)
 तस्यामुत्पादयामास मान्धाता द्वौ सुतौ नृप ।
 पुरुकुत्सं च धर्मज्ञं मुचुकुन्दं च पार्थिवम् ॥ 85 ॥

There is a fn. reading: After 83ab K4 inserts:

युवनाश्वस्य तनयश्चक्रवर्ती जजान ह ।
 कं धारयति कुमारोऽयं न्यस्तो रोरूयते भृशम् ।
 [धारयति is wrong. Should be धास्यति । For न्यस्तो we read elsewhere स्तन्यं]
 मान्धातवर्त्स मा रोदीरितीन्द्रो देशिनीमदात् ॥

There are numerous variant readings in these passages.

* * *

And here is an extract from *Shrīmadbhāgavata*:

श्रीमद्भागवते नवमस्कन्धे षष्ठोऽध्यायः

युवनाम्नोऽभवत्तस्य सोऽनपत्यो वनं गतः ॥ २५ ॥

भार्याशतेन निर्विण्ण ऋषयोऽस्य कृपालवः ।
इष्टिं स्म वर्तयाच्चकुरैन्द्रीं ते सुसमाहिताः ॥ २६ ॥

राजा तद् यज्ञसदनं प्रविष्टो निशि तर्षितः ।
दृष्ट्वा शयानान् विप्रांस्तान् पपौ मन्त्रजलं स्वयम् ॥ २७ ॥

उत्थितास्ते निशाम्याथ व्युदकं कलशं प्रभो ॥
पप्रच्छुः कस्य कर्मेदं पीतं पुंसवनं जलम् ॥ २८ ॥

राज्ञा पीतं विदित्वाऽथ ईश्वरप्रहितेन ते ॥
ईश्वराय नमश्चक्रुरहो दैवबलं बलम् ॥ २९ ॥

ततः काल उपावृत्ते कुक्षिं निर्भिद्य दक्षिणम् ॥
युवनाम्नस्य तनयश्चक्रवर्ती जजान ह ॥ ३० ॥

कं धास्यति कुमारोऽयं स्तन्यं रोख्यते भृशम् ॥
मां धाता वत्स मा रोदीरितीन्द्रो देशिनीमदात् ॥ ३१ ॥

न ममार पिता तस्य विप्रदेवप्रसादतः ॥
युवनाम्नोऽथ तत्रैव तपसा सिद्धिमन्वगात् ॥ ३२ ॥

त्रसद्दस्युरितीन्द्रोऽङ्ग विदधे नाम तस्य वै ॥
यस्मात् त्रसन्ति ह्युद्विग्ना दस्यवो रावणादयः ॥ ३३ ॥

यौवनाम्नोऽथ मान्धाता चक्रवर्त्यवनीं प्रभुः ॥
सप्तद्वीपवतीमेकः शशासाच्युततेजसा ॥ ३४ ॥

ईजे च यज्ञं क्रतुभिरात्मविद्वरिदक्षिणैः ॥
 सर्वदेवमयं देवं सर्वात्मकमतीन्द्रियम् ॥ ३५ ॥
 द्रव्यं मन्त्रो विधिर्यज्ञो यजमानस्तथर्त्विजः ॥
 धर्मो देशश्च कालश्च सर्वमेतद् यदात्मकम् ॥ ३६ ॥

यावत् सूर्य उदेति स्म यावच्च प्रतितिष्ठति ॥
 सर्वं तद्यौवनाश्वस्य मान्धातुः क्षेत्रमुच्यते ॥ ३७ ॥

शशबिन्दोर्दुहितरि बिन्दुमत्यामधानृपः ॥
 पुरुकुत्समम्बरीषं मुचुकुन्दं च योगिनम् ॥

ओंकार मान्धाता का शिल्प वैभव

[This is a scholarly, professional, systematic and praiseworthy literary paper, a class by itself. It was received by us from a person in Madhya Pradesh (very close to this holy mountain) who was found ultimately a liar and a cheat. He swallowed a lot of our money. Hardly gave anything in return. (He was not the only one. Many have cheated us, deceived us, duped us and robbed us in this and some previous philanthropic operations). It was typed in Devanagari. The author's name etc. appearing at the top right corner was crossed out mercilessly by this sinful man. So we don't know who was the writer. But it is worth reading. So we are reproducing it here for the delight of our readers. How sincerely we wish we could find some more writings of this kind so rare in our collection presented herein. We wrote all this just to inform our readers of the reality. The name of the author was suppressed by this wicked man. We cannot give the name because we don't know. This is not a plagiarism on our part. By the way, the external form of the paper was just the opposite in quality when compared with the internal form. It was typed on an 18th century Hindi typewriter. So we found it very difficult to read. There might be some errors, because many technical terms are unknown to us.

We tried our best to read the scratched out name. It seems R. S. Garg. In Māhishmatī smārikā there is a learned paper by Rama Sevaka Garga. May be both the papers are by one and the same author!]

नर्मदा का तटवर्ती भूभाग अपनी अपरिमित पुरा सम्पदा के लिए प्राचीन काल से सुविख्यात रहा है। ओंकार-मान्धाता का पुरातन संस्कृति केन्द्र आज भी अपने गगनचुम्बी देवालयों दुर्ग एवं तोरणद्वारों तथा कलात्मक प्रतिमाओं के लिए सर्वविदित है। यद्यपि अनेक देवालय अब धराशायी हो चुके हैं और कलाकृतियां अपना आकर्षण खो चुकी हैं किन्तु जीर्ण शीर्ण हो कर भी धरातल पर विद्यमान अवशेष ओंकार-मान्धाता क्षेत्र के पुरातन शिल्प वैभव और इस भूभाग के अतीत की समृद्धि का आभास देने में सक्षम हैं। यद्यपि इस भूभाग का एक विस्तृत क्षेत्र सांस्कृतिक दृष्टि से अत्यधिक महत्त्वपूर्ण रहा है, लेकिन सप्तमात्रा से लेकर कोठावा आश्रम तक नर्मदा और कावेरी के दोनों तट एवं बीच में स्थित ओंकार द्वीप का महत्त्व सर्वाधिक है।

ओंकार-मान्धाता आर्य संस्कृति के दक्षिणी प्रचार-प्रसार का एक महत्त्वपूर्ण पड़ाव था। कुल १२८१ कि. मी. लम्बी नर्मदा प्राचीन काल में उत्तरापथ और दक्षिणापथ की विभाजक सीमा रेखा थी। शतपथ ब्राह्मण ग्रन्थ में “रेवोत्तर” शब्द इसका सूचक है। माहिष्मती नगरी से ओंकारेश्वर तक का समस्त भूभाग “माहिष्मत” कहलाता था। ईसी को कालान्तर में अनूप देश कहा गया है। मत्स्य, पद्म, अग्नि और नारदीय पुराणों में वर्णित नर्मदा तट पर स्थित तीर्थ वस्तुतः आर्यों की बस्तियां थीं, उनके आश्रम थे और वहां से संस्कृति का प्रचार-प्रसार होता था। ओंकार मान्धाता में यद्यपि अभी तक कोई पुरातत्त्वीय उत्खनन नहीं हुआ जिससे प्राचीन काल एवं संस्कृति के अवशेष मिले हों, किन्तु महेश्वर उत्खनन अप्रत्यक्ष रूप से यहां की सांस्कृतिक पृष्ठभूमि का दिग्दर्शन है। यहां इतिहास के विकास का एक क्रम मिलता है जो संपूर्ण आर्य जाति के इतिहास का अंग है।

ओंकार-मान्धाता का प्राचीन शिल्प वैभव १० वीं से १३ वीं शती ई. के मध्य का परमार कालीन है। यहां के देवालय भूमिज शैली के अवश्य हैं किन्तु कुछ मंदिर तल विन्यास की दृष्टि से नवीन हैं। सिद्धनाथ मंदिर एक ऐसा प्रयोग है जो अन्यत्र नहीं मिलता। इसे ऊंची जगती पर इस प्रकार निर्मित किया गया है कि गर्भगृह के चार प्रवेश द्वार बनाए जा सकें। चारों ओर अन्तराल के साथ जुड़ा हुआ मण्डप है। अलग से प्रदक्षिणा पथ नहीं बनाया गया। जगती को कलापूर्ण हाथियों से इस प्रकार अलंकृत किया गया है मानो वे गजधर ही हों जिन्होंने गजरथ [विमान] को ऊपर उठा लिया हो।

इस सिद्धनाथ स्तम्भों में लगे हुए भारवाही कीचक अद्भुत प्रकार के हैं। एक साथ इतने प्रकार के कीचक एक ही मन्दिर में कहीं नहीं मिले। सिंहमुखा, वराहमुखा, गजमुखा, आदि अनेक प्रकार के इन कीचकों में एक मातामुखी कीचक भी है। एक मां अपने दो बच्चों को लिए हुए हास्यपूर्ण मुखमुद्रा में भार उठाए हुए अङ्कित यह आलेखन शिल्पी की स्वतन्त्र अभिव्यक्ति है। ऐसा प्रतीत होता है मानों शिल्पी ने निर्माण के समय बोझा उठाने का काम करने वाली किसी महिला को ही आदर्श कर यहां अंकित किया हो। यद्यपि मन्दिर का शिखर गिर चुका है परन्तु उसकी कलात्मकता नष्ट नहीं हुई है। जगती में उत्तर की ओर पश्चिमी चढ़ाववाली जगती पर किसी शोभायात्रा अथवा महोत्सव का अंकन है।

यहीं दुर्गद्वार में अर्जुन एवं भीम कही जानेवाली शिव और भैरव [संभवतः श्रीशैल में प्रतिष्ठित मल्लिकार्जुन एवं डाकिनी क्षेत्र के भीमशंकर] की विशालकाय प्रतिमाएं लगी हुई हैं। गौर सोमनाथ ढाबली मन्दिर ही नहीं पंथिया का शिव मन्दिर एवं ममलेध्वर आदि देवालय मध्यकालीन कला के सुन्दर नमूने हैं। ममलेध्वर मन्दिर में अंकित शिलालेखों के आधार पर इसे भूमिज शैली का प्राचीनतम मंदिर माना जाता है।

ओंकारेश्वर मंदिर का जो स्वरूप आज दिखलाई देता वह अधूरा है। तल विन्यास के आधार पर तो इस मंदिर की जगती का दक्षिण पूर्वी भाग गिर चुका है। आज जिस स्थान पर शिवलिंग प्रतिष्ठित है वह मूल गर्भगृह नहीं है। जो स्थापत्य और शिल्प वैभव शेष है वह अत्यन्त मनोहारी और कलापूर्ण है। मंदिर को रंग लगाकर यद्यपि आकर्षक बनाने का प्रयास किया गया है परन्तु इससे मूल कला दब गई है। यहीं नीचे की ओर देवी मंदिर है जिसका भीतरी भाग छत और स्तंभ पर्याप्त कलापूर्ण हैं। अकेले ओंकारेश्वर क्षेत्र में लगभग ५० मंदिर रहे होंगे। इनमें से अधिकांश अब गिर चुके हैं। कुछ को नये सिरे से निर्मित कर दिया गया है। जो मंदिर गिरे हुए हैं उनमें प्राप्त कलाकृतियां एवं किले के भीतरी दरवाजों पर लगी हुई विशालकाय प्रतिमाएं अभिव्यक्ति में सार्थक और सबल हैं।

ओंकार-मान्धाता की कलाकृतियों में अभिव्यक्ति है, रस है और पौराणिक कथानकों की पृष्ठभूमि भी। शिव प्रतिमाओं में अंधकासुरवध कथानक को शिल्पी ने मनोमय ढंग से तराशा है। भारी और विशालकाय प्रतिमाओं में भगवान एवं आराध्य की विराटता विद्यमान है। देवी प्रतिमाओं में मातृत्व की अभिव्यक्ति को महत्त्व दिया गया है। नायक नायिकाओं तथा सुरसुन्दरियों एवं देवाङ्गनाओं के अंकन में लौकिकता है। उनका लास्य विलास सार गर्भित अवश्य है। एक नायिका को बालक के साथ क्रीडा करते हुए बहुत ही आकर्षक एवं भावभंगिमापूर्ण रूप में शिल्पाङ्कित किया गया है। नारी सुलभ लज्जा के भाव इन कठोर

पाषाण खण्डों में अंकित करना तत्कालीन शिल्पकला की विशेषता थी । चामुण्डा, महिषमर्दिनी, कात्यायनी एवं दुर्गा की प्रतिमाओं में रौद्र रस की अपेक्षा शिल्पी ने मातृत्व का वात्सल्य तराशा है । कात्यायनी [कुन्ती] माता प्रतिमा इसका श्रेष्ठ उदाहरण है ।

स्थापत्य एवं शिल्पकला में युग विशेष की धार्मिक, सांस्कृतिक, आर्थिक तथा ऐतिहासिक स्थिति झलकती रहती है । ओंकार-मान्धाता का शिल्पकला वैभव इसका स्पष्ट उदाहरण है । यहां की शिल्पकला मध्यकालीन मापदण्डों पर आधारित है । समस्त वास्तुकला इस तथ्य की परिचायक है कि उस युग में संरचना का एक सुनिश्चित क्रम, अंग संयोजन, उत्सेध योजना तथा आनुमानिक प्रतिमान निर्धारित थे । मांसल सौन्दर्य, विलास चेष्टा एवं आलिंगन की अभिव्यक्ति सामान्य बात थी । आभूषणों में तरल, एकावली, ग्रैवेयक, केयूर व बलय के साथ कंचुकी परिधान, उरुदाम मेखला तथा चञ्चवीर और उत्तरीय का अंकन सुरुचिपूर्ण है ।

ओंकार-मान्धाता की शिल्पकला संपदा को देखने पर यह तथ्य स्पष्ट हो जाता है कि यह स्थान परमारों के समय का एक तीर्थ ही नहीं, अपि तु कला साधना का केन्द्र था । यहां का सिद्धहस्त शिल्पी एक असामान्य कारीगर और कला आचार्य भी था । उसने अपने नाम के लिए नहीं साधना के लिए शिल्पांकन किए थे । वह कला साधक था । प्रयोग करना और नवीनता लाना उसकी विधा का अंग था । विशालता और विराटता को प्रदर्शित करने में वह माहिर था । यहां का शिल्प वैभव अभी तक कला समीक्षकों तक नहीं पहुंच पाया क्योंकि वह अत्यन्त बिखरा हुआ है । यहां के देवालय क्यों विनष्ट हुए इतिहास इसे नहीं बता पा रहा । यहां के हजारों नमूने नष्ट हो चुके हैं किन्तु जितना भी उपलब्ध है वह श्रेष्ठ है ।

[What follows is an official bulletin. It is numbered serially 14. Issued from Bhopal on 21st June 1988. In Hindi. Some of the matter in the beginning is only an old story. The later portion is good. But all this is very old and scanty.]

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एएनपी /आर. के.के.पी.

ओंकारेश्वर कल और आज

पूर्व निमाड खंडवा जिला मुख्यालय से लगभग ७५ कि. मी. दूर नर्मदा के किनारे स्थित ग्राम मान्धाता ओंकारेश्वर के नाम से प्रसिद्ध है। यहां अत्यन्त प्राचीन मन्दिर देखने को मिलते हैं। यहां १० से १५ वीं शताब्दी तक के ताम्रपत्र और शिलालेख मिले हैं। पुराणों तथा महाकाव्यों में माहिष्मती का बार बार जिक्र आया है और अनेक विख्यात विद्वानों के अनुसार ओंकारेश्वर ही प्राचीन माहिष्मती है। कुछ विद्वानों ने इसका प्रतिवाद किया है।

मान्धाता के सिद्धेश्वर मंदिर के समीप एक अन्य शिलालेख²¹⁰ पाया गया था जिस पर विक्रम संवत् १२८२ [सन् १२२५] और राजा का नाम अंकित है। इसमें इस तथ्य का उल्लेख है कि राजा ने माहिष्मती में ठहर कर रेवा में स्नान करने के पश्चात् कुछ ब्राह्मणों को सातजूना नामक ग्राम दान में दिया था जो आज भी उसी नाम से मान्धाता के दक्षिण पश्चिम में लगभग २० कि. मी. दूरी पर स्थित है।

ओंकारेश्वर के वर्तमान राजा भिलाल रावों के वंशज हैं। ये न केवल यहां स्थित महान् शिव मन्दिर के परंपरागत अभिरक्षक रहे हैं वरन् इन्होंने अपनी वंशावली की जानकारी सुरक्षित रखी है जिसके अनुसार उनके पूर्वज भरतसिंह चौहान राजपूत ने वर्ष ११६५ में मान्धाता को लिया [?] था। [कुछ अक्षर लुप्त हो गये हैं]

यह ग्राम अंशतः नर्मदा के दक्षिण तट पर और अंशतः नदी किनारे स्थित द्वीपनुमा [?] पहाड़ी पर बसा है। यह द्वीप दो कि. मी. लम्बा तथा एक कि. मी. चौड़ा है। मान्धाता द्वीप एक अत्यन्त ही रमणीक एवं लुभावना प्राकृतिक स्थल है। द्वीप के थोड़े ऊपर की ओर कावेरी नामक एक छोटी नदी नर्मदा से मिलती है।

तीर्थस्थल

ओंकारेश्वर देश के प्रसिद्ध १२ ज्योतिर्लिंगों में से एक है। ओंकारेश्वर में अनेक मंदिर हैं। यहां नर्मदा नदी के दोनों किनारों पर पक्के सुंदर घाट हैं [imp. to note] यहां खेडापति हनुमान, तिलभांडेश्वर, केदारनाथ, ऋणमुक्तेश्वर, गौरी सोमनाथ, सिद्धेश्वर, कुन्ती, भीमभैरव और पाण्डवों के मंदिर हैं [!]| मान्धाता का मुख्य मंदिर ओंकारेश्वर का है और नर्मदा नदी के उत्तर किनारे पर द्वीप में स्थित है। मंदिर में एक लिंग प्रतिष्ठित है जिसके कारण ही मान्धाता प्रसिद्ध है। मंदिर के विशाल स्तंभ प्राचीन हैं और पुरानी किसी संरचना के हैं। विद्यमान मंदिर विशेष पुराना नहीं है। विचित्र बात यह है कि लिंग जैसा कि सामान्य रूप से स्थापित किया

²¹⁰ यह शिलालेख नहीं था। यह ताम्रपत्रलेख था।

जाता है, वैसा न तो मुख्य द्वार की सीधी रेखा में है और न ही मंदिर के कलश या शिखर के नीचे ही है। वास्तव में लिंग प्रकोष्ठ एक पार्श्व में है और वह दालान के अंतिम भीतरी छोर के अलावा और कहीं से भी दिखाई नहीं देता। [copy to copy]

पहाड़ी की चोटी पर एक और मंदिर है, जिसे सिद्धेश्वर मंदिर कहा जाता है। विद्वानों की मान्यता है कि संभवतः इस मंदिर का काम अधूरा ही छोड़ दिया गया था। द्वीप के उत्तर की ओर एक मंदिर है जिसे गौरी सोमनाथ का मंदिर कहा जाता है। द्वीप के पश्चिम छोर पर एक ऋण-मुक्तेश्वर का मंदिर है जो बहुत पुराना नहीं है। इसके अतिरिक्त और भी कई मंदिर हैं जिनमें से अधिकांश भग्नावस्था में हैं। द्वीप में किले की चहारदीवारी के भग्नावशेष भी हैं जिसकी निगरानी बुर्जयुक्त दो दरवाजों पर महाकाली और भैरव की मूर्तियां उत्कीर्ण हैं नर्मदा नदी और द्वीप के दक्षिण की ओर कुछ मंदिर हैं उनमें से अमरेश्वर का मंदिर महत्त्वपूर्ण है। मंदिर के द्वार मण्डप की दीवारों पर १०६३ ईसवी के चार शिलालेख खुदे हुए हैं। अमरेश्वर मंदिर के पास ही वृद्धेश्वर का मंदिर है। इसका प्रवेशद्वार सुन्दर नक्काशीदार पत्थरों का बना हुआ है।

नर्मदा नदी की दूसरी धारा [imp. to note] के उत्तरी तट पर वैष्णव और जैन मन्दिरों के अवशेष प्राप्त हुए हैं। मुख्य वैष्णव मंदिर विष्णु के २४ अवतारों का है जो जीर्णशीर्ण अवस्था में है। वहां प्राचीन जैन मन्दिरों के भी खण्डहर विद्यमान हैं। पंथिया ग्राम में इसके पास ही दूसरी पहाड़ी पर जिसे अब सिद्धवरकूट कहा जाता है [!] पुनर्निर्मित प्राचीन जैन मंदिर हैं। वैष्णव और जैन मंदिरों के बीच में एक नाला है जिसका स्थानीय नाम रावण नाला है। नाले के पास १८ फुट लम्बी और दस भुजाओं वाली एक विशाल मूर्ति है। द्वीप के ईशान भाग के अन्त में एक टीला है जहां से पहले भैरव के भक्त अपने आपको नीचे की चट्टान पर फेंक देते थे। १२वीं शताब्दी में यह परंपरा लगभग समाप्त हो गयी। [!]

आदि शंकराचार्य

आदि शंकराचार्य ने ओंकारेश्वर के मुख्य मंदिर के नीचे गुफा में तपस्या की थी [!] तथा नर्मदा के तट पर उनका संन्यास दीक्षास्थल माना जाता है। इसी के अनुरूप कांची कामकोटि पीठ सेवा ट्रस्ट ने जिला प्रशासन के सहयोग से ओंकारेश्वर मंदिर के नीचे स्थित गुफा का जीर्णोद्धार करवाकर शंकराचार्य की प्रतिमा प्रतिष्ठापित की है। [!!] आदि शंकराचार्य जयन्ती के उपलक्ष्य में ओंकारेश्वर में २१ अप्रैल, ८८ को आयोजित एक भव्य समारोह में मुख्यमंत्री श्री अर्जुनसिंह ने आदि शंकराचार्य तपस्या गुफा मंदिर को [!!!] देश को पुनः समर्पित किया। इस अवसर पर कांची कामकोटि पीठ कांचीपुरम् के जगद्गुरु

शंकराचार्य स्वामी जयेन्द्र सरस्वती ने बताया था कि ओंकारेश्वर में लगभग एक करोड़ [!] रुपयों की लागत से शंकर विद्यापीठ, योगकेन्द्र और ध्यानकेन्द्र का निर्माण भी किया जायेगा।

झूलता हुआ पुल

ओंकारेश्वर मान्धाता में लगभग २८ लाख रुपयों की लागत से झूलते हुए पुल का निर्माण "केन्टीलीवर पद्धति" से लोक निर्माण विभाग द्वारा किया गया है। पुल की लंबाई ६०० फुट और चौड़ाई १५ फुट है। यह पुल द्वीप को मुख्य भूमि से जोड़ता है।

विशेष क्षेत्र विकास प्राधिकरण

ओंकारेश्वर के नियोजित विकास के लिए राज्य सरकार ने २७ मई १९७८ को विशेष क्षेत्र विकास प्राधिकरण [साडा] ओंकारेश्वरका गठन किया। इसके पूर्व यहां एक छोटी ग्राम पंचायत थी और उसके सीमित साधनों और कार्यक्षेत्र के कारण ओंकारेश्वर का समुचित विकास संभव नहीं था। इस प्राधिकरण के क्षेत्र में ओंकारेश्वर-मान्धाता, गोदडपुरा और डुकिया शामिल हैं। साडा की भावी योजनाओं में इलेक्ट्रिक लिफ्ट ट्राली लगवाने पहाड़ी पर स्थित गौरी सोमनाथ मंदिर के निकट वन्य जीवन संरक्षण के लिये एक छोटा अभयारण्य विकसित करने और मत्स्य संग्रहालय की स्थापना सहित ओंकारेश्वर आनेवाले श्रद्धालुओं और पर्यटकों को सभी आवश्यक सुविधाएं उपलब्ध कराना शामिल हैं। साथ ही ओंकारेश्वर में कमजोर वर्गों के लिए आवासों का निर्माण, उद्यान, शोपिंग कोम्प्लेक्स, नर्मदा के घाटों का निर्माण, जीर्णोद्धार और उन पर प्रकाश की समुचित व्यवस्था तथा रेन बसेरा का निर्माण भी 'साडा' की भावी योजनाओं में सम्मिलित हैं।

विशेष क्षेत्र विकास प्राधिकरण के गठन के बाद से अभी तक विभिन्न विकास योजनाओं पर लगभग २५ लाख रुपये व्यय किये जा चुके हैं। इसमें महामहिम राज्यपाल द्वारा स्वीकृत अनुदान, स्थानीय शासन विभाग, नगर एवं ग्रामीण नियोजन तथा पर्यटन विभाग, विकास खण्डों के विकास मद से तथा गन्दी बस्ती उन्मूलन योजना में प्राप्त राशि शामिल हैं। "साडा" ने ओंकारेश्वर में भारतीय यात्री विकास समिति, नई दिल्ली के सहयोग से १० लाख रुपये की लागत से "यात्रिका भवन" का निर्माण भी किया है। यात्रिका में १० कमरे तथा २ बड़े हाल भी हैं। इससे यात्रियों को ठहरने की सस्ती सुविधा प्राप्त हुई है। इसके अतिरिक्त यात्री सुविधाओं के लिये यहां विभिन्न समाज के लोगों द्वारा बनवाई गई लगभग २५ धर्मशालाएं भी हैं। विशेष क्षेत्र विकास प्राधिकरण ने ओंकारेश्वर में बस स्टैंड, सुलभ

काम्प्लेक्स, रेस्ट सेंटर, बसेरा निर्माण, हाई स्कूल के भवन, मार्कण्डेय आश्रम रोड, भेरू घाट रोड और गढ मार्ग का निर्माण, बाल वाडी भवन, घाटों पर महिलाओं के लिये शेड निर्माण, बाउन्ड्री वाल, ट्यूबवेल एवं पम्प हाउस का निर्माण आदि कार्य संमिलित हैं। 'साडा' ने ५२००० रुपये की राशि से एक मोटर बोट भी क्रय की है। ओंकारेश्वर में होम गार्ड्स की ओर से एक आधुनिक मोटर बोट की व्यवस्था भी की गयी है। ओंकारेश्वर में पेयजल समस्या का भी निराकरण 'साडा' ने किया है।

लगभग एक सौ लोगों को नर्मदा में डूबने से बचानेवाले तथा राष्ट्रपति के जीवन रक्षा पदक से सम्मानित कुशल तैराक चौथ्या भी विशेष क्षेत्र विकास प्राधिकरण में कार्यरत हैं। चौथ्या को ५०० रुपये महीने वेतन दिया जाता है।

तीर्थस्थल ओंकारेश्वर में प्रति वर्ष प्रति वर्ष लगभग १२ लाख से अधिक यात्री श्रद्धालु और पर्यटक आते हैं। श्रावण महीने में यहां अधिक धूमधाम रहती है। ओंकारेश्वर में वैसे तो वर्ष भर मेले सरीखा दृश्य रहता है और अनेक छोटे मोटे मेले लगते हैं किन्तु कार्तिक पुर्णिमा मेला और शिवरात्रि पर भरने वाला मेला बहुत बड़ा होता है।

ओंकारेश्वर के मुख्य मंदिर की व्यवस्था के लिये ९ सदस्यीय मंदिर ट्रस्ट कमेटी है। यह व्यवस्था जनवरी १९६७ से है तथा इसके पूर्व १९५९ में यहां पब्लिक ट्रस्ट था। वर्तमान कमेटी में जिला कलेक्टर के प्रतिनिधि के रूप में अनुविभागीय अधिकारी तथा खाद्य अधिकारी शामिल हैं। मंदिर प्रबन्ध कमेटी की वार्षिक आय लगभग ४.५० लाख रुपये वार्षिक है ²¹¹। मंदिर ट्रस्ट भी ओंकारेश्वर के विकास के लिये प्रयासरत है तथा ट्रस्ट की ओर से ही परिक्रमा मार्ग का निर्माण किया गया है

आज ओंकारेश्वर में अन्नपूर्णा आश्रम मार्कण्डेय संन्यास आश्रम रामकृष्ण मिशन की ओर से साधना स्थल जैसे और भी आश्रम तथा मंदिर हैं।

ओंकारेश्वर परियोजना

नर्मदा घाटी विकास परियोजना के तहत ओंकारेश्वर बहुउद्देश्यीय प्रस्तावित है। ओंकारेश्वर परियोजना के तहत खण्डवा जिले के ग्राम मान्धाता के पास एक बांध बनाया जायेगा। इस बांध से एक लाख ४४ हजार हेक्टेयर की सिंचाई खरगौन एवं धार जैसे

²¹¹ Acc. to Omkareshwar Darshanika, a kind of official publication, the amount was Rs. 35 lakhs.

सूखाग्रस्त जिलों में प्रस्तावित है। इस परियोजना से ५२० मेगावाट विद्युत का उत्पादन भी होगा। इस योजना की अनुमानित लागत ७४०.९० करोड़ रुपये हैं।

क्र. १४

भोपाल: दि. २१ जून, १९८८

एएनपी / आर. के. पी.