Siddhavarakūṭa
(Digambara Jaina Siddhakshetra)

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A Collection of Photographs

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Om Shanti Mandiram
Columbia Mo
2013
Just as Omkareshvar is one of the 12 Jyotirlingas of the Hindus, Siddhavarakuta is one of the 24 tirthankars of the Jains. There are a number of Jain temples at Siddhavarkuta, the oldest temple has images dating back to 1488 A.D.

A Jain temple is a place of worship for the followers of Jainism, an Indian religion that believes in non-violence towards all living beings. It is one of the oldest religions with roots in ancient India. Jainism is a religious minority in India, with 4.2 million followers.

Jain Temples architecture is different throughout India. There are two major types:
- Shikar-bandhi – temple with Dome and marble pillars
- Ghar – temple without Dome

The main part of a Jain temple is called the "Gambhara" (Garbha Graha) in which a stone carved God idol should reside. Pilgrims are required to bath and wear puja clothing to enter the Gambhara.

The Siddhavarakuta Jain Temple is located on the north banks of the Namada River at Omkara Mandhata, also known as Omkareshvar.
Siddhavarkut [Siddhavarakūṭa]

East Nimar District Gazetteer

Siddhawarkut (22º 15’ N and 76º 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 Siddhawarkūṭ 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?]
The Jaïn sanctuary, “Shree Digambar Jaïn Sidhakshetra,” is located in the village of Siddharwarkut. There are several Jaïn temples in the enclosure of the sanctuary. The oldest dates from the 15th century. Others were built recently by the members of the community. Jaïn sages particularly appreciated this place for the beauty of its landscape and its environment, facing the junction between the Narmada and Kavéri. The sacrality of this place is registered in many ancient Jaïn texts and books. One of these works, the Nirvana Khanda, tells that two Chakrawarti1 called Madhava Chakrawarti and Satan Kumar Chakrawarti reached spiritual awakening in this place. Other ascetics also found awakening there after having killed their bad internal energies with the weapon of thorough meditation. They were filled of knowledge and wisdom and were regarded as “Siddhas”2 (Jaïn Trust, 2004).

1 Chakrawarti: Jaïn ascetic.
In 1935, Shree Mahindra Kirtiji, a devout Indore Jaïn came to visit the surrounding area. He found the Jaïn sanctuary in ruin, and, by visiting neighborhoods, he found sculptures dating from the 15\textsuperscript{th} century. A few years later, other members of the Indore Jaïn community returned to this place to begin the restoration of the sanctuary. They again gave life to this ancient site, which again became an important place of pilgrimage. One of its principal temples is called “Bada mandir ji.” The Jaïn pilgrims visiting Siddhavarakut were impressed by this temple and filled with devotion, they decided to invest in
the construction of others around them as well as dharmashalas to accommodate the visitors (Jaïn Trust, 2004).

Today the enclosure of the sanctuary is completely in order with steps going up towards the square, 15 temples, 2 dharmashalas, and a comfortable guest house. The available lodging can accommodate more than 350 people. All the medical infrastructure necessary is installed. The place has electricity and is connected to telephone lines. An administrative office, a canteen, and even a store make it possible for the sanctuary to operate autonomously. All this is managed by the temple committee. This sanctuary forms a complete unit, resembling a small village, now having a modern appearance.

Fig. 60: Enclosure of the Siddhavarakuta Jaïn sanctuary. Several temples are organized around the square. On right-hand side, there are dharmashalas. Source: CREMIN Emilie, March 2005.
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Additional photographs provided by Emilie Cremin:
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[Image of a religious mural with sanskrit script]
Our great benefactor Father Geo George Kannanayil along with his associates has extensively photographed this pious place located on the north bank of Narmada-Kaveri Rivers at Omkara Mandhata some time ago and presented his entire collection to Om Shanti Mandiram as his benevolent gift.
OM: One God Universal Garland of Offerings #13
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This picture shows a calf drinking milk from a lioness, and a lion cub drinking milk from a cow. A great philosophy for peace on earth, been in existence for many millennia—Jainism (religion).

At Siddhavarakuta, close to Omkara Mandhata.
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श्री १००८ मुलानाथक प्रायोजन भंग बान ज्ञाजनाथ जी की प्रतिमा जी की रूपया १००८ देवरं जेट श्री महेंद्र श्री गोकुलाल भाईचंद्र और रघु सुप्रूढ जयवेवलाल गोविंद पाटेपुर दिलाम भाबर कोढा (गुजरात) वालों
 ने बैठी शुद्धिक के विशाज तत्त्व करणा है।
पांच प्रतिमा जी विगितान जर्राई दीर संवत २४८१. विक्रम-
→ संवत २०६९ मंगल कुमार पक्ष २ संक्रांत २०. ५३
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