

# DWADASHA JYOTIRLINGAS OF MAHA DEVA CHILDREN'S EDITION



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## FOREWORD

*Om Ekadantaya Vidmahe Vakratundaya Dhimahe, Tanno Danti Prachodayaa*

*Om Tatpurushaya Vidmahe Mahadevaya Dhimahe Tanno Rudra Prachodayaat*

This book contains the story of how Dwadasha Jyotirlingas are formed, in which place are they situated and the pious people who built it

This book also contains the basics of the temple in easy english for children. The book also has pictures which help in learn how the temples look.

We are the brothers studying in Sankara Senior Secondary School Adyar of Chennai.

This is our maiden endeavour to make a pictorial presentation of Dwaadasha Lingas with suitable explanation. The order has been taken from the Adi Sankaracharya hymn on Dwadasha Jyotirlinga.

The jyotirlingas are as follows

*Kedaro Himavat prushthe Daakinyaam Bhimasankarah / Vaaranaasyam cha  
Viswestriumbako Gautamithatey / Saurashtreya Sommanathasva Srisaile Mallikarjunah / Ujjainyam Maha  
Kala Omkare cha Amaresvarah / Vaidyanathaaschithabhumo Nagesho Daarukaananey / Sethubandhe  
cha Ramesho Ghrusneswara Siva lingo / Avatara Dvadasakamethchhambhoh Paramatmana /*

The Most Celebrated Twelve Jyotirlingas of MahaDeva are as follows: Somnatha in Saurashtra, Mallikarjuna in Sri Sailam, Maha Kala in Ujjain, Amareswara at Omkara, Vaidyanatha in Chitha Bhumi, Nageshwara at Daruka, Kedarnath in Himalayas, Triambaka on the banks of River Gautami, Rameswara at Setu Bandhana, Bhima Sankar in Dakinya, Visweswara in Varanasi and Ghrishneswara.

The text of this work has been sourced from the works of our grandfather, Shri V D N Rao.

May we have the privilege to dedicate this meek maiden effort to His Highness of Kanchi Mutt.

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## Introduction

### Origin of Shiva Linga and its Universe :

In the days of yore on Himalayas, there was Daruvana famed for rigorous Tapasya by Maharshis along with their wives; the Maharshis were performing several Sacred deeds like Yagnas, Vratas, Agni Karyas, Swadyaayana of Vedas and Scriptures and fastings: their life's motto was Nitya Karma, penance and strict adherence of whatever Scriptures prescribed. The women folk of the Munis too followed the prescribed discipline, food restrictions and living regimen of austerity and devotion.

Into this Society of Self Restraint, unfailing virtue and orderliness arrived a semi-lunatic, nude and weird stranger who had compelling and magnetic personality of strong and attractive physical limbs. His body was full of Bhasma (Ash); his hair was dishevelled; his teeth were crooked and his eyes were blood red. Some times, he laughs boisterously; some time he shouts; some times he cries loudly; suddenly he brays like a donkey; and some other times he breaks into dances amourosly. He makes sheepish advances to women irrespective of their age. The Maharshis in Daruvana suffered the Stranger for enough of time and finally confronted him in a group.

Among the Rishis, somebody said that after all Rishis would not get angry normally but when they did, no force on Earth could be withstood! Thus arguing among themselves the Rishis told the Stranger that it was highly improper for householders to behave irresponsibly as him and that he should atleast wear a piece of cloth when he could be respected; otherwise the alternative would be to drop his Linga (Male Organ). Maha Deva then replied that even Brahma would not be able to drop his Linga by force, let alone Maharshis; yet, he himself would drop it on his own; having said so Maheshwara disappeared and assumed the Linga Swarupa.

As this incident took place, there was all round havoc in the Universe: In all the Tri Lokas, the process of Srishti got badly affected; there was Universal agitation and nothing was shining; Sun became pale, Agni lost its heat and the Stars ceased to twinkle; and the Planets lost their moorings. The Maharshis immediately realised that the dropping of the Linga brought in terrible consequences and ran up to Brahma and conveyed the entire incident but Brahma too was agitated as to what happened and confirmed that the so called Stranger was none else but Maha Deva himself .

Brahma furthud stated that it would take ages to realise Him; that he was the Supreme Lord of Devas, Rishis and Pitru Devas; that after thousand Yugas he would assume the Form of Kaala Deva at the time of Pralaya; that he was the unique creator with his own radiance; that he was Vishnu with Lakshmi as his consort and Srivatsa as his invaluable ornament; that he was called as Maha Yogi during Krita Yuga; that he was the 'Kratu Rupa' or Yagna Swarupa in Treta Yuga; that in Dwapara Yuga, he was 'Kaalaagni' and in Kali Yuga he is Dharma ketu or the Insignia of Virtue; that Panditas ought to realise all these Forms; that he was the combined Shakti of Agni's amoguna, Brahma's Rajo Rupa and Vishnu's Satvika Rupa; that he was 'Digvasana' and was named Shiva; and that hence the Maharshis should worship Shiva with singular earnestness as he was Ishana, Avyaya and that Maha Linga who would surely dispel the fund of ignorance which they never had as he desired to counsel you but you made in the incorrigible mistake of your life time!

## SOMNATH TEMPLE



*saurāṣṭradeśe viśade'tiramyeyotirmayaṃ candrakalāvataṃsam  
bhaktipradānāyakṛpāvatīrṇaṃ taṃ somanāthaṃ śaraṇaṃ prapadye॥ 1॥*

Prajapati Daksha married away twenty-seven of his daughters to Chandra Deva (Moon) but Chandra had great infatuation for Rohini to the neglect of other wives. Daksha warned Chandra about this but to avail. Finally, Daksha cursed Chandra who appealed to Lord Brahma, and in turn asked to perform Tapasya to Bhagavan Siva.

Chandra observed penance at Prabhasa on the banks of River Sarasvati. On His appearance Lord Siva sorted out the problem with a compromise that the first bright fortnight of a month (Sukla Paksha) Moon would wax and the 'Krishna Paksha' Moon would wane. He also blessed Moon to be near Him and Parvati always. Being a 'Sparsha' (Touch) Jyotirlinga-Somachandra- stated to be the first in the series, it would remove away all physical ailments particularly tuberculosis and leprosy and bathing in the Water body 'Chandra kund' washes off all the sins committed by human beings. Known as Prabhat Kshetra [near Veraval in Kathiawad District of Saurashtra in Gujarat], Lord Krishna is believed to have performed his Leelas (Miracle Acts). [An ever-burning light in a cave of the Temple is witnessed till date].

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JAI JAI SOMNATH JYOTIRLINGA

## MALLIKARJUNA TEMPLE



śrīśailaśaṅge vibudhātisaṅgetulā drituṅge'pimudāvasantam  
tamarjunaṁ mallikapūrvamekaṁ namāmisāṁ sārāsamudrasetaṁ 2

Stated to be the Second in the Series of Jyotirlingas on the Sri Parvat ( in Andhra Pradesh, some 230 Km. from Hyderabad) on the banks of River Krishna, Lord Siva's manifestation as Mallikarjuna along His Spouse Devi Bhramaramba is famed mythologically as the place of penance when Kartikeya was unhappy and felt cheated as Ganesha was wedded earlier despite the Agreement that whoever arrived first after full 'Bhu Pradakshina' (circumambulation of the World) would win, but Ganesha took advantage of a Provision of the Scriptures and performed a 'Pradakshina' of his parents and attained the advantage of the Pradakshina.

Siva and Parvati visited the Krouncha Mountain to pacify Kartikeya but to no avail and thus moved over to the Mountain from Kailasa. As Vrishabha Deva –Siva Parvati's Carrier-did Tapasya to the Maha Devas, they appeared as Mallikarjuna and Bhramaramba at this Holy Spot.

Lord Rama is said to have installed a Sahasralinga and Pandavas set up PanchaPandavaLingas in the Temple surroundings. In a tiny hole inside the temple of Devi Bhramaramba, one could still hear the buzz of bees as the Devi assumed the form of bees all over Her Body and killed Mahishasura.

Adi Shankara is reputed to have scripted his well-known Work named 'ShivanandaLahari' at this Temple.

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JAI JAI MALLIKARJUNA JYOTIRLINGA

## UJJAIN MAHA KAALESHWAR



*avantikāyāṃvihitāvatāraṃmuktipradānāya ca sajjanānām  
akālamṛtyohparirakṣaṇārthaṃvandemahākālamahāsureśam॥ 3॥*

Where Mahaakal is there, Kshipra river is there and where nirmala or clean and clear thoughts and conduct and tranquility prevail, that is the most ideal Place for bathing in Kshipra and discard all hardships and prostrate to Maha Kaal Deva leaving far behind the psyche of death and destruction. Indeed, even worms and flies after death are destined to become the Followers and Servants of Rudra Deva Himself!. Skanda Purana describes the conversation of Devi Parvati and Maha Kaala as the latter explains about the Mahatmya of Avanti Kshetra for more than one reason: It is the abode four major rivers, viz. Kshipra, Divya Nava, Nilaganga and Gandhavati; AshtaMatrikas viz. Uma, Chandi, Eshrari, Gauri, Ruddhida, Siddhida, Varayakshini and Veerabhadra; Maha Maya Sati called KapalaMatrika who has Seven Matrika Associates viz. Ambika, Sheetala, Siddhi daayani, Ekaanamsha, Brahmani, Parvati, and Yoga shalini; Chatissashthi Yoginis, besides of EkadashaRudras viz. Kapardi, Kapaali, Kaala naatha, Vrishasan, Triambak, Shulapani, Chiraavaasa, Digambara, Girisha, Kamachari, SarpabhushanaSharva; AshtaBhairavas viz. Dandapaani, Vikrant, MahaBhairava, Batuk, Baalak, Bandi, ShatpanchaShatak, and Aparā Kaala Bhairava. There are also ten Vishnu Swarupasviz. Vasudeva, Ananta, Balarama, Janardana, Narayana, Hrishiksha, Varaaha, Dharanidhara, Vamanarupa and Seshashaayi; Six. Ganeshas viz. Ruddhi Siddhi daata, Kaamadaata, Ganapati, Vighnanasshaka, Pramodi and ChaturdhiVrata Priya; DwadashaAdityas viz. Aruna, Surya, Vedanga, Bhanu , Indra, Ravi, Anjuman , Suvarna reta, Aha Karta, Mitra, Vishnu and Shanatana. It is the Place for KapalaVimochana or where Shiva begged of alms in Brahma's skull from Annapurana and the breaking of the skull at the Maha Kaala Vana caused such reverberation that Daityas headed by Haya who utilised Maya and its Illusions in stealthily attacking and tormenting Devaganas were destroyed once for all. Ujjain is the Place where Parama Shiva killed Tripurasuras with his

Pashupatastra; Avantipuri is another name where Vishnu protected Devas from Danavas as he dragged them from hiding at Meru and terminated them to save Devas and restored Swarga; Kutasthali is another name which Brahma selected to preserve creation by throwing Kushagrass on Bhumi and Padmavati since Amrita was distributed by Mohini to Devas and Lakshmi was restored to Vishnu. Ujjain is considered as the Naabhi or navel of Prithvi. This indeed is the famed Dwadasha Linga Pradesha by the illustrious presence of Mahakala Linga. It is further signified as being one of the 51 Shakti Peethas where Devi Sati's (kurpar or 'kehuni') elbow point fell at Harasiddhi Devi Mandir at Rudra SaagarSarovar. Among the most essential Places not to be missed in Ujjain of course is Mahakala Mandir itself:

*AkaasheTaarakam Lingam PataaleHataleshwaram, MartyalokeMahakaalam Linga Trayanamostute!*

MahaKaleshwar Linga Mandira Praangan or Courtyard is quite wide and in the Centre is the 'Garbha' or 'Sanctum sanctorum' where MahaKaleshwara Linga is visualised in the Lower Level and Omkareshwara Linga is precisely on the higher plane. The fairly broad Maha Kaal Linga is NaagaPariveshthita or surrounded by serpents made of silver and a hanging tub with incessant drops of Sacred Water on the top of the Linga, with Ganesha on one side, Devi Parvati on the other and yet another Kartika Deva with Ghee and Oil Lamps ever lit up. On the higher plane of the Southern side is the Mandir are the AnadiKaleshwar and VriddhaKaleshwara placed. Nearby the MahaKaleshwara Mandir's Sabha Mandap is the Koti Tirtha with small Shiva Umbrellas placed and a Dharma shala too. In the sabha Mandap are Shri Rama Mandir and Avantikapur's Adhishthatri Avantika Devi Murti too.

\_\_\_\_\_JAI JAIMAHAKALESHWAR JYOTIRLINGA\_\_\_\_\_

## OMKAARESHVARA LINGA TEMPLE



*kāverikānarmadayohpavitresamāgamesajjanatāraṇāyaḥ*

*sadaivamāndhātrpurevasantamoṅkāramīśaṃśivamekamīdeḥ 4॥*

Situated in the banks of River Narmada on the Mandhata (Shivapuri) Island formed in the shape of OM in Sanskrit, Omkareshwar is one of the Jyotirlingas besides another Amkareshwar Linga.

The Legend was that Sage Narada visited Vindhya Raja and the latter bragged that Vindya was the highest and most powerful Mountain in the entire World. Narada replied that perhaps Meru was the greatest in terms of height and might. Vindhya Raja felt jealous and executed severe 'Tapasya' and pleased Maha Siva and requested that He should always be present in the Vindhya and establish a Linga of Bhagavan on the banks of Narmada near to Vindhya.

Hence the Omkara Jyotirlinga there. Puffed by Siva's presence there, Vindhya Raja grew taller and taller to compete with Sumeru. This obstructed Sun God's routine circumambulation of the Universe and He had to return half way turning half of the Universe dark. Bhagavati asked Sage Agastya from Kasi to visit Vindhya Raja who out of veneration bent down to touch the feet of Agastya who asked Vindhya to be in that position till he returned and he never came again from the South.

\_\_\_\_\_JAI JAI OMKAARESHVARA JYOTIRLINGA\_\_\_\_\_

## VAIDYANATHA LINGA



*pūrvottareprajvalikānidhānesadāvasantaṃgirijāsametam|  
surāsurārādhitaṇḍapadmaṃśrīvaidyanāthaṃtamahaṃnamāmi|| 5||*

The legendary background of Vaidyanath Jyotirlinga is related to Ravana, the Epic Villain of Ramayana. The King of Lanka carried out a relentless meditation to Bhagavan Shiva at Kailash Mountain for mighty supremacy and indomitability in the Three Worlds. But as Shiva was still not responsive, he moved out from Kailasa to Vrikshakandhaka towards south of Kailasa. He dug up a pit and worshipped a Shivalinga even by sacrificing his ten heads, one by one and at the end Lord Siva became visible and gave away boons of supremacy as also to let a Shivalinga to carry to his Kingdom on the condition that he should reach Lanka directly without even a single halt, lest the Linga if kept down would never be pulled out! Devas became afraid that once Ravana turned unquestionable, there would be chaos in the Three Lokas and Dharma would be wiped out. Thus Devas prayed to Devi Parvati and Ganesha to somehow avert the risk of the Shivalinga to reach Lanka. Parvati appeared on way to Ravana in disguise and in collaboration with Varuna, tempted pure waters of major holy Rivers to quench Ravana's thirst. The King's stomach got bloated and he wished to stop over urgently for a relief and luckily for him, there was a lad- Ganesha Himself- whose assistance was sought to hold the Linga for a few moments without placing it on the Ground. By the time Ravana returned, the lad- Lord Ganesha- disappeared and the Linga was stuck to the Ground. That was the Jyotirlinga of Vaidyanath who was a 'Vaidya' (Physician) and he helped to piece together the slashed heads of Ravana at the time of his sacrificing them one by one.

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JAI JAI VAIDYANATH JYOTIRLINGA

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## NAGESHWARA TEMPLE



*yāmyesadaṅgenagare'tiramye vibhūṣitāṅgaṃvividhaiścabhogaiḥ  
sadbhaktimuktipradamīśamekaṃśrīnāganāthaṃsaraṇaṃprapadye॥ 6॥*

Bhagavan's tenth manifestation (of Jyotirlinga) is popular in save His devotees; a Demon named Daruka who obstructed virtue was destroyed to save His devotee VaishayaSupriya. While this was the Statement of Siva Purana's 'Koti Rudra Samhita' establishing that Nageswara Jyotirlinga was no doubt evident but there are atleast three claimants of Its Location viz. Nageswara Temple at Dwaraka, Gujarat; Naganath Temple at Aoudhya, Maharashta; and Jagasewara Temple at Almora, Uttarakhand. Happily, all are winners! The legend was that there a demon couple named Daruka and Daruki and the latter secured a grant from Devi Parvathi that wherever the Demoness went, the entire forest would accompany her. The Demons were spoiling Yagnas and all Spiritual tasks, there were protests from the harassed Brahmanas to Sage Ourva and the Sage cursed the demons and followers that they would all be destroyed on earth; the Demons had thus no alternative excepting to move into the Sea. Daruki's boon from Parvati became ineffective since the forests were all submerged in the Sea. The Demons thus restricted only in the Sea and resorted to pirating the Ships moving in the Seas and one of extremely devoted Bhakta of Lord Siva named Supriya-a Vaiasya- was thrown into a prison on the ship. Bhakta Supriya who was a staunch devotee of Lord Shiva made sincere prayers and Bhagavan appeared, killed all the Demons and released the prisoners especially Supriya. Commemorating this joyous moment, the Lord blessed that a Swayambhu Nageswara Jyotirlinga be manifested on the Sea Coast as the memorable Nageswara Jyotirlinga\_\_\_\_\_ JAI JAI NAGESHWARA JYOTIRLINGA\_\_\_\_\_

## KEDARNATH TEMPLE



*mahādripārśve ca taṭeramantaṃsampūjyamānaṃsatatamṃmunīndraiḥ  
surāsurairyakṣamahoragāḍhyaiḥkedāramīśaṃśivamekamīdeḥ 7॥*

Kedar Linga is known from times immemorial: In Krita or Satya Yuga, Maharshi Upamanyu is stated to have worshipped Kedara Linga and attained salvation; in Dwapara Yuga Pandavas are stated to have performed Tapasya. Bhagavan MahaDeva assumed the form of Mahisha or a Buffalo and confused PanchaPandavas at the same time as they were engrossed in Tapasya at different locations of Kedar now reputed as PanchaKedar by displaying different body parts of the Mahisha viz. at Tunganath displaying hands, Rudranath the face of Mahisha, MadaMaheshwara displaying naabhi or middle portion, and Kalpeshwar his 'jataajuta' or the coarse head hair; the Prishthabhaga or the hind body part is stated to have displayed at Kedarnadha proper. One legendary account states that Bhima of Pandavas in the course of his Tapasya got disturbed by the appearance of the hind part of the Buffalo, chased it and tried to forcibly hold its tail but the ever potent Maha Deva eluded him and succumbed with severe injuries. Pashupati Nath Temple in Khatmandu in Nepal is stated to have displayed the MahaMahisha's head portion. In Kedar there is no built up Murti swarupa as such but a raised and reclining dome basically a trikona mountain black stone is worshipped with 'Abhishekas' or oblations with Milk, flowers, fruits, honey, agarbattis or perfumed sticks and so on. Kedar Mandir appears very oriental and typically mountainous with imposing locale surrounded by places like Bhrigupantha (Maghna ganga), Ksheera ganga called Chorathadithaal, Vasuki thaal, Gugukund, BhairavaShila. The Mandir displays PanchaPandava Murtis, Bhima cave and Bhimashila. The half-broken exit gate is fabled as the Sacred Gate from which Adi Shankara baled-out and flew up to Kailasa. Beautiful white stone life size idols of Shankaraacharya addressing his disciples in the rear portion hall of the Kedar Mandir is in place. Apart from the Murtis of Pandavas, those of Usha and Aniruddha, Lord Krishna, Shiva Parvati and so on too. Around the Mandir in a Parikrama are noticed Amrita Kund, IshanaKund, Hamsakund, RetasaKund, and such other Tirthas.

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JAI JAI KEDARNATH JYOTIRLINGA

## Trayambakeshwar Temple



Tryambakeswar in Nasik

*sahyādriśīrṣevimalevasantaṃgodāvaritīrapavitradeśe|*

*yaddharśanātpātakamāśunāśamprayātitaṃtryambakamīśamīde|| 8||*

Located thirty kilometers away from Nasik in Maharashtra, the renowned Jyotirlinga of Lord Siva's materialization called Tryambakeswar attracts thousands of Pilgrims round the year providing boons of material and spiritual nature. The 'Punyakshetra' or the Hallowed Land is the source point of the Holy River Godavari basically owing to the Bhagiradh-like efforts of Sage Gautama and his highly pious wife Ahalya. By virtue of the Sage's penance and prayers, Lord Varuna was pleased to supply water and food grains in abundance but this boon turned out as a basis of jealousy of co-Sages and their spouses who created a cow to plunder the grains. Sage Gautama destroyed the cow, but as a result of a sin in killing the cow, the Sage-couple was banished to a hermitage on the mountain of Brahmagiri. Gautama Muni made relentless 'Tapasya' to Bhagavan Siva who endowed Gautama with the double desires of bringing River Ganga near his hermitage and also stay on its banks along with Bhagavati in the form of a Jyotirlinga. Lord Siva granted both the wishes that Ganga was brought near Gautama's hermitage as River Godavari and His manifestation as Tryambakeswara Jyotirlinga in the vicinity of the River Godavari / Gautami. In parallel to this, another legend related to the formation of a Jyotirlinga at Brahmagiri was the interface of Lords Brahma and Vishnu vis-à-vis an appearance of a Fire Column whose height and depth could not be ascertained by both of them; Brahma's cover-up story was that he found out the height of the Column and cited a Ketaki flower as a witness. Bhagavan Siva gave a curse to Brahma that there would not be worship of the former and Brahma gave a return curse that Lord Siva would be pushed underground. Hence the manifestation of Tryambakeswara under the Brahmagiri. The Jyotirlinga is of a small size in a depression on the floor with water oozing out constantly from the top. The force of waves of the River appears to be as per the intensity of the prayers of Sage Gautama according to the conviction of devotees in the Temple! Major Tirthas (Tanks) in the Temple are named Gangadwara representing the source of Ganga (Godavari), Varaha Tirtha where Lord Vishnu had a bath in the River in Varaha Rupa (appearance as Boar) and Kushvartha Tirtha considered as the most significant as Sage Gauthama spread across Kusha or Darbha Grass while securing the waters of Ganga. There are also other Tirthas like Gangasagara, Bilva Tirtha, Indra Tirtha, Vishwanath Tirtha, Mukund Tirtha, Prayag Tirtha, Rama Kund, Lakshmana Kund and so on. Among the Shrines are Kedarnath, Rameshwar, Gauthameshwar, Kasi Viswanatha, Jareswar, Kanchaneswar, Tribhuneswar, Venkateshwar, and Hanuman. There are daily worships at the Main Temple thrice and the nightly 'arthies' are special.

\_\_\_\_\_JAI JAI TRAYAMBAKESHWARA JYOTIRLINGA\_\_\_\_\_

## Ramanathaswamy Temple



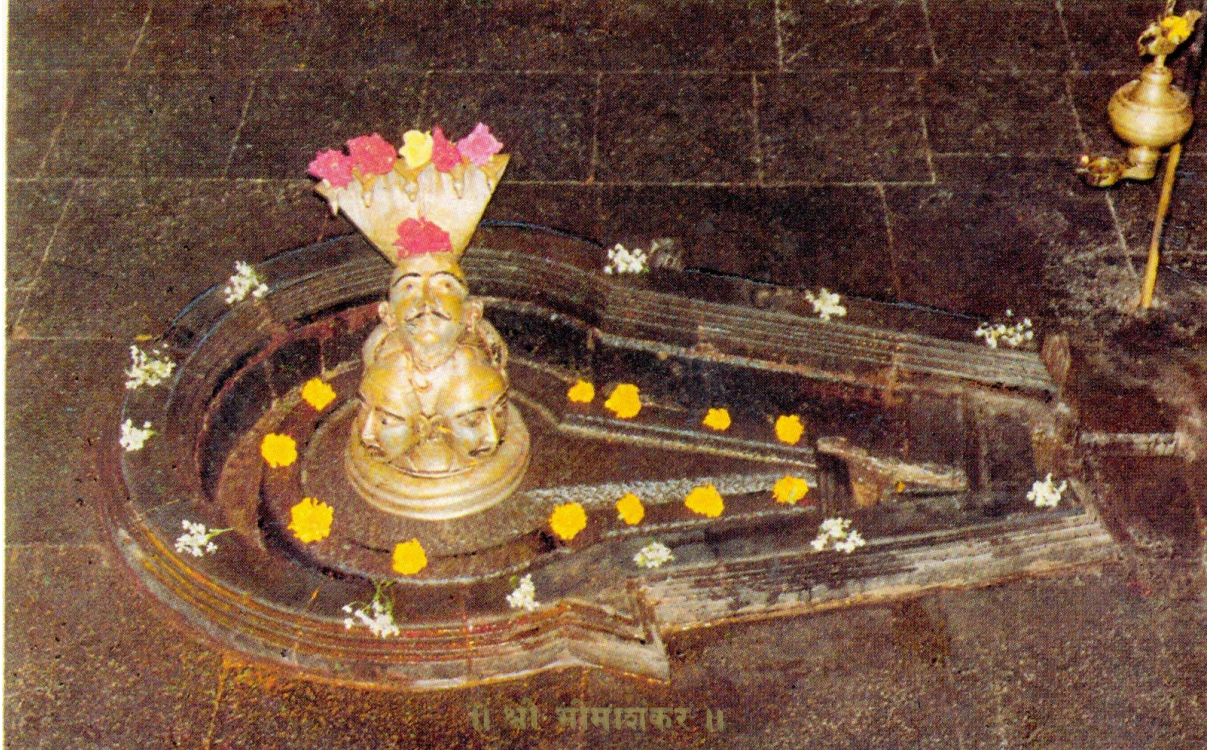
*sutāmrparṇījalarāśīyogenibadhyasetumviśikhairasaṃkhyaiḥ*

*śrīrāmacandreṇasamarpitamtaṃrāmeśvarākhyamniyataṃnamāmi॥ 9॥*

The Temple town of Bhagavan Siva's emergence of the penultimate Jyotirlinga of Ramalingesa happens to be celebration point of Lord Rama's glorious victory over Ravana paying Rama's dutiful homage to Bhagavan. Having crossed 'Setu Bandhan' across the Sea on the triumphant return journey from Lanka en route Ayodhya, Lord Rama despatched Hanuman to visit Varanasi to pray Viswesvara and bring a replica of the Linga from Kasi for consecrating it on the Sea coast but since Hanuman could not return by the appointed auspicious time, Sita Devi improvised a Sand Linga and installed it formally amid Vedic Mantras. Hanuman was upset and wished that the Linga blessed at Kasi Viswanadha be substituted instead and tried hard to pull it out but the so-called temporary Sand Linga was ever lasting, blessing millions of devotees eversince. The Kasilinga or Hanumanlinga too was installed nearby which too is worshipped by devotees. It would be appropriate therefore that worship to Rameswara or Rathnaswami be performed after the homage to the Kasilinga or Hanumanlinga. Spread over some 15 acres of land, the Temple could boast of rich architectural heritage of high Raja-Gopurams on the East (126 feet high) and the West side, massive walls, a huge Nandi (18 feet tall and 22 feet long) and a 4000 feet long Corridor with 4000 carved granite pillars on raised platforms on either side- perhaps the longest in the World. [It is gathered that in the initial stages, the Rameswara Jyotirlinga was kept in a thatched abode till the 12th Century but royal patronage of passing centuries of the Kings of Travancore, Ramanadha -puram, Nagercoil and Pudukkottai helped improve the Temple Complex.] There are some thirty six Teerthas ( Water Springs) with considerable medicinal and mineral properties - twenty of them being in the Temple Complex itself- most of the devotees bathing bucketfulls in all the twenty two Wells dotted all over the surroundings and walking along into the Sanctum drenched and then only perform the worship to the Jyotirlinga in queues! Festivals at the Rameswara Temple are celebrated in 'Ani' Masa (June 15- July 15) signifying Lord Rama's victory worship to Bhagavan Siva and two 'Brahmotsavas' or Annual Principal Celebrations are observed in 'Adi' and 'Masi' months as per local customs. Six worships commence from 5 am each day and Special worships are on Fridays.

\_\_\_\_\_JAI JAI RAMESHWARA JYOTIRLINGA\_\_\_\_\_

## Bhimashankar Temple



*yaṃḍākiniśākinikāsamājenīṣevyamāṇampiśitāśanaiśca|  
sadaivabhīmādipadaprasiddhaṃtaṃśaṅkaraṃbhaktahitaṃnamāmi|| 10||*

Located some 110 km from Pune in Maharashtra State in the Ghat region of Sahyadri Hills near the head of Bhima River which merges with Krishna River too, the fifth Jyotirlinga Bhima Shankar is the appearance Maha Siva who exterminated Demon Bhima, son of Kumbhakarna (Ravan's brother). Demon Bhima on knowing from his mother Kartaki wanted to avenge the death of his father by Lord Rama, who was Maha Vishnu's incarnation and performed penance to Lord Brahma to receive boons to conquer even mighty opponents. He defeated Indra and Devas and what provoked Lord Siva most was the tormenting of a great Siva Bhakta King Kamarupeshwara insisting that the latter should pray to himself rather than Siva Linga. As the Demon was about to destroy the Sivalinga by his sword, Lord Siva appeared and destroyed the Demon and His mighty anger caused sweat which flowed as River Bhima. The Jyotirlinga thus manifested is a powerful representation of 'Ardhanariswara' in the Temple provides proof of instant fulfillment of all desires thus attracting thousands of devotees, especially on all Mondays and definitely on Sivaratri festivals. As in certain other cases like at Ujjain, the Swayambhu Jyotirlinga is set at a level lower than the normal Ground; also there is a speciality here that there is a constant flow of water from the Linga! The Bhima Shankar Temple is also associated with the killing of Demon brothers Tripurasuras along with Devi Parvati in Her manifestation as Kamalaja whose temple is also nearby the main Temple. Devi Kamalaja was worshipped by Brahma and hence She was called so. Sakini and Dakini were among those whose contribution was significant in the battle against Tripurasuras and their worship too is performed at the Temple. 'Mokshakund Tirtha', the Holy Waterbody adjacent the Bhimashankar Temple is associated with Sage Kausika. [Maratha Rulers especially Nana Phadnavis who built the Temple 'Sikhara' and Sivaji who made donations to its maintenance were intensely associated with the progress of this illustrious Temple].

\_\_\_\_\_JAI JAI BHIMASHANKAR JYOTIRLINGA\_\_\_\_\_

## Kashi Vishwanath



*sānandamānandavanevasantamānandakandaṃhatapāpavṛndamī  
vārāṇasīnāthamanāthanāthamśrīviśvanāthamśaraṇaṃprapadye॥ 11॥*

Famed as the Place of Devas that was founded by Bhagavan Siva Himself, some five thousand years ago, Kasi has a hoary legend with age-old reputation worldwide. Varun and Ganga and also Ganga and Assi, flowing in different directions, confluence in 'Varana-Assi' or Varanasi. Euologised in several Scriptures like Rig Veda, Puranas and Epics, Varanasi was the Capital of Kasi King three thousand years ago and was reputed even by then as the capital of Religion, Education and Arts.

The City covers some five kilometers of the Holy and Everflowing Ganges on its banks attracting lakhs of Pilgrims every year as the Ultimate Destination of Salvation for Hindus of all faiths and several other religions especially Buddhists and Jains. This is the Sacred Spot that Bhagavan Visveswara manifested as AvimuktaJyotir Linga in the renowned Golden Visveswara Temple. It is stated that Lord Brahma executed such severe Tapasya (meditation) here so much that Maha Vishnu moved His head across fast in disbelief and the latter's ear ring fell at a place on the bank of the River and was since then named 'Manikarnika'. When Brahma was once chanting Vedas in praise of Siva in the form of the Jyoti Linga with the former's 'Panchamukhas' or Five Heads, some pronunciation slips rolled by and becoming furious of the chanting mistakes which changed the sense of the words, Lord Siva opened the third eye and burnt one of Brahma's heads which fell and found a permanent place in the Temple. Viswanath Temple is also considered as a 'Shakti Peetha' and it is believed that Devi Sati's ear-rings fell at the spot where Devi Visalakshi's shrine stands. Durga Temple, nicknamed as Monkey Temple owing to large presence of monkeys, is considered as a shrine built originally by Durga Herself and during 'Navarathras' of Dussera festival comes fully alive and heavily crowded by devotees. SankataVimochana Hanuman Temple is frequently visited, especially on Tuesdays and Saturdays. The Shrine of Annapoorni is stated as the place where Devi Annapurna Herself distributed 'Anna' (Rice and so on) to devotees when there was a famine and Lord Siva Himself asked for 'Anna' in the disguise of a Beggar! There is a Neelakantha Temple with Deities of Vishnu, Avikuntha Vinayaka, Virupakshi Gauri, Saniswara and clusters of Five-some Lingas. A separate shrine dedicated to Kala Bhairava is present too in the courtyard.

On the five km long banks of Ganga are situated hundreds of 'Ghats' or areas specified for many purposes like Sacrifices or Yagnas and Homams, some for bathing, or some even owned privately. For eg. 'Dasasvamedha' Ghat where Brahma performed Yagnas and even now Brahmanas perform Agni Sthomas, Homas to please Devas and so on; 'Manikarnika Ghat' where Brahama executing

penance and Vishnu's earrings were lost at the disbelief of the former's strength to do it so seriously and shook His earrings fast and lost these while Devi Parvati pretended that Her earrings were lost so that Siva would stay back to search the lost earrings forever and thus tie Him up to Kasi and such other beliefs. Besides the Manikarnika Ghat, where dead bodies are brought for the favour of cremation to attain mukti (salvation), there is the Harischandra Ghat where the Illustrious King Harischandra was posted as a slave and cremated dead bodies with the same belief of attaining salvation. It is common knowledge that the King stood for truthfulness and endured the most severe tests of life of selling off his family and Son, became a life-long slave and finally attained Salvation. There are many other Ghats like 'Man Mandir Ghat' near Someswara Linga Temple, Lalitha Ghat near by Pasupatinath Temple, Tulasi Ghat where Tulsidas scripted Ramayana and so on. Ranging from Kings and Queens, Foreign Plunderers, Great Saints like Adi Shankara, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda, Dayananda, Tulasidas and Guru Nanak; Educationists, Artistes, Disbelievers, Non Hindu Followers, and even modern Pandas-anybody be named and be found- are all attracted to this Memorable City for their reasons of Salvation, Religion, worldly fulfilments, mischief or mere curiosity: but Maha Deva Blesses them all whatever may be the motive!

## Grishneshwar Temple



*ilāpureramyaviśālake'sminsamullasantam ca jagadvareṇyam  
vandemahodāratarasvabhāvaṅghrṣṇeśvarākhyamśaraṇamprapadye|| 12||*

On a mountain called Devagiri, there were a pious Brahmana named Sudharma and his wife Sudeha but she was barren and had no child. Sudeha proposed that her younger sister, Ghushma or Kusuma who was a staunch devotee of Parameswara be wedded to Sudharma. Sudharma agreed and in course of time, they had a male child due to Lord Siva's blessings. Ghushma was in the habit of daily worship by creating Sivalingas of clay and immerse them after Puja and Abhisheka in a pond nearby. Sudeha got jealous of her younger sister as she was blessed with a son. One night Sudeha killed the child out of jealousy and threw away the child in the same pond where the Sivalingas were immersed by her. The latter no doubt wept over the tragedy but continued her daily worship of Siva none-the-less. The dead body of the child floated in the pond where Ghushma used to immerse the lingas and there was commotion in the family and indeed in the village. Ghushma still continued her prayers to Lord Shankara who finally stood before her and desired to kill Sudharma, but she requested not to do so out of her extreme kindness. Lord Siva brought back the child from death and also asked Ghushma for any boon and she requested Him to stay in pond and the Lord agreed to do so and hence the formation of Ghrishne- shwara as a Jyotirlinga. Alternative names of the Place are Ghushmeswar or Kusumeswar. This Temple is situated in the Village of Verul or Yelur where River Yala flows and is some 30 km from Aurangabad. [From Aurangabad, Ellora is 30 km, Ajanta is 106 km and Shirdi is 130 km.]

jyotirmayadvādaśalingakānāmśivātmanāṃproktamidamkrameṇa  
stotrampāṭhitvāmanujo'tibhaktyāphalamtadālokyanijambhajecca

itiśrīmadśaṅkarācāryaviracitamdvādaśajyotirlingastotraṃsampūrṇam