



The twelve jyotirlinga are Somnath in Gujarat, Mallikarjuna at Srisailam in Andhra Pradesh, Mahakaleswar at Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh, Omkareshwar in Madhya Pradesh, Kedarnath in Himalayas, Bhimashankar in Maharashtra, Viswanath at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, Triambakeshwar in Maharashtra, Vaidyanath at Deogarh in Jharkhand, Nageswar at Dwarka in Gujarat, Rameshwar at Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu and Grishneshwar at Aurangabad in Maharashtra.



Tryambakeshwar

This article is a researched article and borrows heavily from printed and electronic encyclopedias as well as material provided by our panel of research scholars, astrologers, academics and pundits.

We had covered Somnath, Srisailam, Rameshwaram in the previous issues. In this issue we cover Tryambakeshwar.

The Legend of the 12 Jyotirlingas

As per Shiv Mahapuran, Brahma and Vishnu once had an argument regarding the supremacy of creation. To test them, Shiva pierced the three worlds in the form of an endless pillar of light, the Jyotirlinga. Vishnu went downwards and Brahma went upwards to find the end of the light. Brahma lied that he had found the end, while Vishnu conceded defeat. Shiva appeared as a second pillar of light and cursed Brahma that he would have no place in ceremonies while

Vishnu would be worshipped till the end of eternity. The Jyotirlinga is the supreme partless reality, out of which Shiva partly appears. The Jyotirlinga shrines, thus, are places where Shiva appeared as a fiery column of light.

Originally, there were believed to be 64 Jyotirlingas whilst 12 of them are considered very auspicious and holy. Each of the 12 Jyotirlinga sites takes the name of the presiding deity – each considered a different manifestation of Shiva. At all these sites, the primary image is a lingam representing the beginningless and the endless stambha pillar, symbolizing the infinite nature of Shiva.

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The Shiv Lingam At Tryambakeshwar

Pradesh, Kedarnath in the Himalayas, Bhimashankar in Maharashtra, Viswanath in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, Tryambakeshwar in Maharashtra, Vaidyanath in Deogarh, Jharkhand, Nageswar in Dwarka, Gujarat, Rameshwar in Rameshwaram, Tamil Nadu and Grishneshwar in Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

Tryambakeshwar
Of the twelve jyotirlingas of Lord Shankara,



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the tenth one is known as Tryambakeshwar. Tryambak is near Nasik in Maharashtra. This great jyotirlinga on the banks of the Gautami has a unique form. Unlike others, the Lord in this temple's garbha griha is not worshipped with abhisheka of water (Jalahari). There is just a bottom part of the pounding stone (Ukhali) instead, like a hole. In that hole, there are three lingas shaped like the thumbs. Hence the name Tryambakeshwar. Of these three lingas, the linga of Mahesha has a constant shower of water from an orifice above. It is a natural source of water coming down as abhisheka for the Lord.

Purana of the Tryambakeshwar Temple

Ahalya's husband, Gautama was doing tapas or penance on the Dakshina Mountain. It did not rain there for a hundred years and the land was drying up with the result that many life forms began disappearing. Seeing these conditions of drought, the residents, the saints, and all the birds and animals fled from there. Saint Gautam did a great Mangalik tapas through Pranayama for six long months. Varuna, the deva of rains, was pleased and appeared before Gautama, who asked Varuna for water. At the behest of Varuna, Gautam dug a hole on his hand. With the help of Varuna's miraculous power, it filled with water. Varuna said, "Due to the power of your penance, this hole would be an unending source of water 'Akshya'. It will become famous by your name. It will augment all holy rituals like yagna, dana, tapa, homa, shraadh, and worship of Gods.

After the water was acquired, the saints started making preparations for the yagna and the production of "breehika".

Once when Gautama's disciples went to fetch water from that waterhole, some of the saints' wives arrived for the same purpose. They insisted on taking water first. Gautama's disciples called Gautama's wife. She intervened to allow her husband's disciples to fetch water first. The wives of the

The Nassak Diamond



Glass copy of the famous Nassak Diamond from the "Reich der Kristalle" museum in Munich. In reality the Nassak was nowhere nearly this blue, and it had many more facets when it was an 80 carat triangular stone. It was later recut to a 43 carat emerald cut.

The Nassak Diamond (also known as the Nassac Diamond and the Eye of the Idol) is a large, 43.38 carats (8.68 g) diamond that originated as a larger diamond in the 15th century in India. Found in the Amaragiri mine located in Mahbubnagar, Andhra Pradesh and originally cut in India, the diamond adorned the statue of Shiva in the Trimbakeshwar Shiva Temple from at least 1500 to 1817.

The Nassak Diamond originated in the 15th century in India. Although the date of the original cutting is unknown, the original cutting was performed in India and had sacrificed everything to size while giving the diamond a form and appearance similar to that of the Koh-i-Noor diamond. From at least 1500 to 1817, the Nassak Diamond adorned the statue of Shiva in the Trimbakeshwar Shiva Temple, near Nashik (Nassak). In 1817, the British East India Company and the Maratha Empire in India began the Third Anglo-Maratha War. During the Maratha war, the Nassak Diamond disappeared from the Shiva statue.

The Nassak Diamond quickly resurfaced in the possession of Baji Rao II the last independent Indian Peshwa Prince, who handed over the diamond to an English colonel named J. Briggs. In turn, Briggs delivered the diamond to Francis Rawdon-Hastings, the 1st Marquess of Hastings who had conducted the military operations against the Peshwa. Rawdon-Hastings delivered the diamond to the East India Company as part of the spoils of the Maratha war. The East India Company then sent the Nassak Diamond to England, to be sold on the London diamond market in 1818. At the London diamond market, the Nassak Diamond was presented as an approximately 89 carats (18 g) diamond of great purity "but of bad form," having a somewhat pear-shape. The diamond further was characterized as a "rudely faceted, lustreless mass." Despite its appearance, the diamond was sold for about 3,000 pounds (equivalent today to £179,000).

The Nassak Diamond Today

In early April 1970, the diamond was rated one of the thirty great stones of the world and placed on display at Parke-Bernet Galleries in New York City. The diamond was sold at auction for \$500,000 (allowing for inflation, this would now be \$2.99 million) to Edward J. Hand, a then 48-year-old trucking firm executive from Greenwich, Connecticut. This was the second highest auction price ever for a diamond at that time.

rishis felt insulted and complained to their husbands and while doing so added a few lies here and there. The great saints at once started the worship of Ganesha as an initial puja in anger. When Ganesha appeared before them and granted some boons, they asked for the power to be able to insult and chase Gautama away. Ganesha understood that Gautama was very helpful by nature and tried to persuade the saints into changing their wish. He knew that but for Gautama's efforts, the saints would be

craving for a single drop of water. But the saints would have none of it. Reluctantly, Ganesha had to accede to the request of the adamant rishis, but warned them to be ready to face the consequences of angering a great saint like Gautama.

One day, when Gautama went to get some "breehi", he saw a thin, starving cow. Just when he lifted a little twig to shove the cow away, the cow fell dead. The other rishis found their opportunity and accused



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Of the twelve jyotirlingas of Lord Shankara, the tenth one is known as Tryambakeshwar. Tryambak is near Nasik in Maharashtra. This great jyotirlinga on the banks of the Gautami has a unique form. Unlike others, the Lord in this temple's garbha griha is not worshipped with abhisheka of water (Jalahari). There is just a bottom part of the pounding stone (Ukhali) instead, like a hole. In that hole, there are three lingas shaped like the thumbs. Hence the name Tryambakeshwar. Of these three lingas, the linga of Mahesha has a constant shower of water from an orifice above. It is a natural source of water coming down as abhisheka for the Lord.



The Godavari Bridge or Kovvur-Rajahmundry Bridge is a truss bridge spanning Godavari river in Rajahmundry, India. It is Asia's second longest road-cum-rail bridge crossing a water body, after the Sky Gate Bridge in Kansai International Airport, Osaka. This bridge, in addition to Godavari Arch Bridge, has been widely used to represent Rajahmundry in arts, media, and culture. It is one of the recognised symbols of Rajahmundry.

Gautama of slaying a cow "gohatya". They insulted him and said that he must leave that place immediately in order to save it from the aftermath of gohatya – cow slaughter. Gautama became very sad and left.

Gautama wanted to absolve himself of the sin of gohatya. He resorted to tapas recommended by great saints. He began the difficult task of bringing the waters of the Ganga by the power of his tapas, take bath in that water and chant the Shiva mantra a crore times and worship the parthiva linga. Shiva was pleased and told him that he is indeed a pure soul and a great mahatma and that great injustice was done to him.

Shiva told him that he could ask for some boons. Gautama asked for Ganga, which would be of great help to humanity. Shiva gave Ganga to Gautama, in the form of tatwarupa avishishta jal . After taking the water, Gautama requested Shiva to absolve him of the sin of cow slaughter. Shiva purified Gautama and wanted to go back to his abode after that. But Gautama asked the Lord to remain on earth until the end of Kaliyuga. Ganga prayed to him and requested him to stay on earth, along with his consort, Parvati. For the welfare of the world, Lord Shiva granted Ganga her wish.

Ganga wanted to know from Lord Shiva, how people would know about her greatness.

The rishis said, "When Brihaspati stays on Simha Rashi (Leo), we shall stay here on your banks and shall take a holy dip in your

waters thrice a day before taking the Darshan of Shiva. Only by doing so, would we able to wear away our sins."

On hearing this, Lord Shiva and Ganga stayed there. Ganga also came to be known as Gautami and the Linga came to be known as Tryambaka.

The river which gave away cows as godaan became Godavari. Ganga who came on the request of Gautama became Gautami Ganga. That was the auspicious time of brahmagiri, the time in between, when kurmavatar was over, but before the assumption of varahavatar, the Sanghiparva . The planet Guru (Jupiter) was in the sign of Simha (Leo), Magha Shuddha Dashami, Thursday afternoon when Gautami Ganga was born.

Tryambakeshwar Temple

The extraordinary feature of the jyotirlinga located here is that whereas all the other jyotirlingas have Shiva as the main deity, at Tryambakeshwar, the lingam has three faces embodying Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Rudra. Due to excessive use of water, the linga has started to erode. It is said that this erosion symbolizes the eroding nature of human society. The lingas are covered by a jeweled crown which is placed over the gold mask of Tridev (Brahma Vishnu Mahesh). The crown is said to be from the age of Pandavas and consists of diamonds, emeralds, and many precious stones. The crown is displayed every Monday from 4-5 pm.



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The entire black stone temple is known for its appealing architecture and sculpture and is at the foothills of a mountain called Brahmagiri. Three sources of the Godavari originate from the Brahmagiri mountain.

The temple has been built as per the Indo Aryan style and has been beautifully adorned with idols and sculptures, comprising figures of humans, animals as well as yakshas. Encircling the Tryambakeshwar temple is a colossal wall, made out of stone. In the path that leads to the temple is a large statue of a bull and as one enters the sanctum sanctorum, the marble idol of Nandi Bull, the vehicle of Lord Shiva, comes into view. The jyotirlinga is situated right in the center of the garbha griha and from here, the river Ganga trickles constantly throughout the year.

It is believed that Tryambakeshwar is the holiest place of Hindu mythology. River Godavari originates from here and a person is believed to have acquired salvation, once he or she visits Tryambakeshwar. The work of constructing the present temple of Tryambakeshwar was begun by Shrimant Balaji Bajirao alias Nanasaheb Peshwa in 1755 in the first half of the Margashirsha month (around December) and was completed in 1786. It took 31 years to construct the temple at a cost of Rs. 16 lacs at the time. There are three "lingas" of the size of a thumb and they are called Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh – the creator, the organizer and the destroyer. These lingas are natural (emerged naturally). The waters of the Ganga flow over the Linga of Shiva. At that time, a grant of Rs. 1000 per month was given for performing puja and offerings. The deity is worshipped thrice a day and an additional worship with flowers at pradosha time.

The place is known for its scenic beauty during the monsoons, surrounded as it is by lush green hills and untouched by pollution. Anjaneri mountain, the birthplace of Lord Hanuman, is 7 km from Tryambakeshwar. ■

The Godavari River



The Godavari is the second largest river in India and is often referred to as the Vriddh (Old) Ganga or the Dakshin (South) Ganga. The Godavari River is the only river in India that flows from western to southern India and is considered to be one of the seven sacred rivers. Godavari River rises near Trayambak near Nasik, northeast of Mumbai in the state of Maharashtra at an elevation of 1067 m and flows for a length of about 1465 km before merging into the Bay of Bengal. It flows for 692-Kms before entering

Andhra Pradesh at Basara in Adilabad district. It flows through the Eastern Ghats and emerges out at Polavaram into the plains. At Dhawaleswaram the river divides into two branches, the Gautami and Vasishta. Some of its tributaries include Indravati, Manjira, Bindusara and Sarbari. Important urban centers on its banks are Nasik, Aurangabad, Nagpur, Nizamabad, Rajahmundry, and Balaghat.

The Godavari, throughout its entire length, is sacred to the Hindus and there are several places of pilgrimage on its banks. Trimbakeshwar and Nashik are major pilgrimage sites where one of the four SinhasthaKumbhMela takes place. Every twelve years, Pushkaram, a major bathing festival, is held on the banks of the Godavari. The next Pushkaram festival is scheduled to be held in 2015.

The upper reaches of the Godavari are dry in winter and spring, making it virtually useless for irrigation. At its mouths, however, the development of a navigable irrigation-canal system, linking its delta with that of the Krishna River to the southwest, has made the land one of the richest rice-growing areas of India.

The banks of Godavari river has many pilgrimage sites.

- Trimbakeshwar, One of the twelve Jyotirlingas and ancient temple of Lord Shiva
- Nashik - One of the four Sinhastha KumbhMela
- Paithan - Saint Eknath's native place, famous Jayakwadidam , and a beautiful garden - Sant Dnyeshwar Udyan
- Nanded - Takht Sri Hazur Sahib, One of the five most sacred places in Sikhism
- Basar - Sri Gyana Saraswati temple is situated on the banks of Godavari
- Dharmapuri, Andhra Pradesh - Hindu Temple of Lord Narasimha
- Kaleshwaram - Sri Kaleswara Mukhteswaraswamy Temple on Trivenisangamam of rivers Godavari, Pranahita, and a third illusionary flow of river Antarvaahini.
- Bhadrachalam - Hindu Temple of Lord Rama
- Rajahmundry - Center for Telugu Literature
- Pattiseema - A village where a Hindu temple of Sri Veerabhadra Swamy is located on a small hill on an island in the river
- Antarvedi - Laxmi Narasimha Swamy temple
- Konaseema - Picturesque delta of Godavari