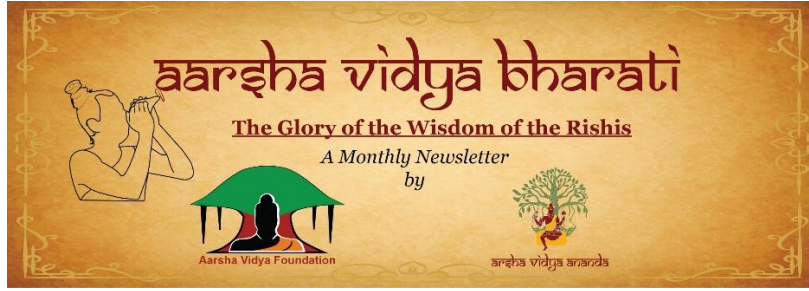

Aarsha Vidya Bharati - Aug 2023

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A monthly newsletter that will bring you more happiness, more wisdom and more freedom



This is one of many articles from our monthly newsletter. Access the [August 2023 issue](#) or read any of [the articles](#).

The Sacred kṣetra of Jyotirlinga-s and Śaktipīṭha-s of Bhārat

Varsha Shankar, Bengaluru

This *jagat* is a *vibhūti* of *Īśvara*. Marvelous and awe-inspiring, if one stops to think about it. Shining brightly within this *jagat*, is this land - *Bhārat*. Among the numerous incredible facets of *Bhārat*, is its history and unbroken connection to the ancients. Every corner of *Bhārat* is brimming with stories. Some are a few hundred years old, some thousands of years old, and still others from a time before time. And yet they seem to be in a continuum. One running into the other. With their connection to physical places, they offer us tangible ways to connect with the intangible.

Of special significance among these places are the *Jyotirlinga-s* and *Śaktipīṭha-s* of Bharat.

The *Purāṇa-s* tell us that Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma were once debating over who is superior. To help settle the question, Lord Shiva created a brilliant pillar of light and asked them both to find an end and come report it back to him. The one who found either end first would be declared the winner. Lord Vishnu took the form of a boar and dove down to find the bottom. Lord Brahma took the form of a swan and flew up to find its start. Neither was able to find an end! It is from this form of Lord Shiva as a pillar of light, that the *Jyotirlinga-s* were formed.

There are 12 *Jyotirlinga-s* in different places in *Bhārat*. These are ancient shrines dedicated to Lord Shiva. Each has unique stories attached about how Lord Shiva visited the place and blessed those who lived there at the time.

Another story tells us about how the *Śaktipīṭha-s* came to be on earth. King Daksha once conducted a *mahāyajña* but did not invite his daughter, Sati (who was a form of goddess Durga) nor his son-in-law Lord Shiva. Against the advice of Lord Shiva, Sati went to the *yajña* site (accompanied by some trusted *Gaṇā-s*) and asked her father for the reason why they were excluded from the guest list. Daksha was disrespectful to Sati and then went on to insult Lord Shiva. Unable to bear this insult and stay there, nor able to return with this news to her husband, Sati entered the



sacred fire and gave up her life. On hearing of this, Shiva rushed to the *yajña* site, picked up what remained of Sati's body and started to dance the *Tāṇḍava* - the dance of dissolution of the *jagat*. To stop Shiva's *Tāṇḍava*, Lord Vishnu used his Sudarshana Chakra to cut Sati's body into 51 pieces. This brought Shiva out of his trance and he saved the *jagat*. The places where these pieces of the Devi fell are known as *Śaktipīṭha*-s.



18 of these *Śaktipīṭha*-s are considered the most significant of the 51,52 and even 108 as they are considered variously by different *Purāṇa*-s. They are temples dedicated to the worship of Devi in her various forms.

Over the coming issues of this newsletter, we will bring to you narratives of our *tīrthayātra*-s to each of these *Śaktipīṭha*-s and *Jyotirlinga*-s, the connected stories and glories of the temples.

Do come forward to share about your *tīrthayātra* to any of these places – aarshavidyabharati@gmail.com