

NARSINGHPUR

(442) FORT OF CHAURAGARH, CHAUGAN

Situated on a peak of Satpura range. This fort has been constructed by using big and small stone blocks and lime and mud mortar, of which the remains of fortification wall as three entrances can be seen even today the Rewa Kund and ancient pyramidal temple housing a broken sculpture of Narsingh belong to the Kalachuri period, while the fort can be attributed to the Gond rulers of 16th century A.D. in the ruins inside the fort stand Ranital, barrack for keeping the prisoner, amphitheatre and the palace of Gond King Premnarain in 1818, after the downfall of Gond rulers the Britishers damaged the fort very badly.

There are also the remains of the buildings constructed during the Maratha period, which stand in between the Ranital and King's Palace. This was very important fort during the reign of Gonds and Marathas. It was built during the period of ruler Sangramshah.

(443) PANDAVA MATHA, NOUNIA

This place, known as Pandava Matha is associated with Jainism. The present structure is neither as per *shahtras* nor like the traditional temple style, It appears that it has been built to save images of Jaina Tirthankars kept at side. The sanctum of the temple has no roof and *sikhara* and houses four sculptures of Jaina Tirthankars including Parswanatha. Besides, the Jaina Tirthankars can also be seen in the *pradakshinapatha*. Here the sculptures of Mahavir Swami, Rishabh Natha and Chandraprabhu can be seen. All these images belongs to 10th-11th century A.D.

(444) SOMESHWARA TEMPLE, BARMANKALAN

This east-facing temple, dedicated to Shiva has two parts in plan-sanctum and *mandapa*. This *mandapa* is square in plan and has three arched entrances. A Nandi carved of black stone is sitting in the *mandapa*. The arched entrances of the sanctum are made of stone having decorated wooden doors. The sanctum houses a Sivalinga.

The sanctum is decorated from *jangha* to dome with sculptures of another ruined temple belonging to Kalachuri period in 10-11th A.D., which have been fixed in five rows. There are 115 sculptures in this temple. The temple has been built 17th-18th century A.D. during Maratha period.

(445) ANCIENT GARUDA PILLAR BARMANKALAN

This square pillar is built of black and green stone and depicts ten incarnations of Vishnu and mini arches on its lower part, while the upper part is flat and plan. It has four panels on three sides while only three on the eastern side. One can see four armed Lakshmi Narain, tortoise and fish incarnations and two-armed Garuda on the western side.

On the southern side four armed Vishnu, four armed Narsimha, four armed Nri-Varaha and Hanumana are depicted and on the eastern side the images of Parasurama, Dashratha, Ram-Sita, Venu-Gopala can be seen. On the northern side four armed Ganesha, Ashwamedha Yajna and four armed Siva-Parvati are beautifully depicted. It has been built during 17th-18th century A.D.

(446) ANCIENT SCULPTURE OF AMBIKA DEVI, KHERAPATI

The two armed Ambika of Kalachuri period is sitting in *lalitasana* on a lotus seat. Her both arms are broken, wearing *jata mukuta*, lotus flower is also shown by side. The seat bears a two-line inscription. The middle panel depicts her right feet. A Lion and a Nandi can also be seen on either side of the panel along with the male and female devotees. Sculpture belong to 10th century A.D.

(447) MARHIA OF FOUR ARMED BALAJI, BACHAI

Five old sculptures have been collected from an old temple of Kalachuri period and kept in this *maraha*. The main deity at this place is four-armed standing Vishnu, whom people call Balaji. Its *parikara* and both upper hands are broken, left lower hand is in *varada mudra*, while the right lower is holding *sankha*.

A deity holding *kalash* is depicted on a lotus seat. A few *rishis* with joint hands are also depicted. Besides Vishnu sculptures, four other sculptures-mini sculptural piece of door jamb, gomed Ambika, four armed Ganesha and two armed Garuda are also kept at this place. Sculptures belong to 11th century A.D.

*(448) GARHI (FORTRESS), PITHERA



The village Pithera is situated on the high land of the Narmada. In the later half of 17th C. the Gond King Raja Balat Singh who was the ruler of 184 villages (acquired in the form of a jagir from the *garh mandala* ruler) constructed this fortress.

The main entrance of the fortress seems to reveal its glory. Although the main entrance is intact, the middle & back portions of the fortress are in a ruined state. Two old temples dedicated to Shiva and Garuda stand on the banks of the Narmada offsite Pithera.

*(449) GARUD TEMPLE –

This is an east facing temple on a high mound which is referred to by the local people as Gurud temple. Probably a Gurud seated statue of Vishnu would have been here, but at present except for a Shivlinga in the corner of the sanctum sanctorum no statue is seen. There is circumambulation around the sanctum sanctorum of the statuesless temple. Probably there would have been statues in the three corners of the temple. There are ruined steps going to the roof of the temple. There are small *shikhar* in all the four corners alongwith the main *shikhar* of the temple.

This temple was built in circa 16th –17th C. by the Gond king Balwant Singh and shows an influence of two Islamic style in its construction. It is said that due to Garud seated Vishnu, the ancient name of this village was Garudapuri which in due course became Gararu.

*(451) SHIV TEMPLE –

On the bank of the Narmada there is a Shiv Temple (relatively on a less high mound) whose walls and the base are strong. There is circumambulatory path around the *sanctum sanctorum*. There are open plain doors fitted with spring and spy-holes all around.

The walls are plain and smooth the architecture is of the Gond period showing a distinct influence of two Islamic styles.