

Adi Shankaracharya statue at Omkareshwar

September 23, 2023 • vajiramandravi.com



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Why in news?

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister unveiled the 108-foot-tall 'Statue of Oneness' of Adi Shankaracharya at Omkareshwar.
 - The statue depicts Shankaracharya as a 12-year-old child when he is said to have visited Omkareshwar.
- Omkareshwar is the temple town located on **the Mandhata island** of Khandwa district.
 - It will form an important tourism circuit, along with Ujjain, Maheshwar and Mandu religious towns.

Who was Adi Shankaracharya?

- **About**
 - Adi Shankara, who is believed to have lived between 788 and 820 AD, was born in Kerala's Kaladi, situated on the bank of the Periyar River.
 - He became a sanyasin at an early age and left his Brahmin household, where he is said to have made his way to Omkareshwar.
 - Here, he studied under his guru Govinda Bhagavatpada.
- **Proponent of Advaita Vedanta**
 - Adi Shankaracharya became a proponent of Advaita Vedanta, challenging prevailing philosophical traditions – including Buddhism and Jainism.
 - Advaita Vedanta is a school of Hindu philosophy that teaches **non-duality**, or the absence of separation between the subject and object.
- **Notable works of Adi Shankaracharya**
 - He is said to have authored 116 works. The most notable among them are:
 - **Commentaries (Bhashyas)**
 - **Brahma Sutras Bhashya** - Shankaracharya wrote commentaries on the Brahma Sutras, also known as the Vedanta Sutras, which are foundational texts for the Vedanta school of philosophy.
 - **Upanishad Bhashyas** - He wrote commentaries on several major Upanishads, including the Isa Upanishad, Katha Upanishad, and Chandogya Upanishad, among others.
 - **Bhagavad Gita Bhashya** - Shankaracharya provided a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, one of the most important texts in Hindu philosophy.
 - **Prakarana Granthas** (Introductory Texts):
 - **Vivekachudamani**: This work explores the concept of discrimination between the eternal and the non-eternal and is considered one of Shankaracharya's masterpieces.
 - **Upadeshasahasri**: It consists of a thousand verses and offers teachings on Advaita Vedanta.
 - **Atma Bodha**: A concise treatise on self-realization, it outlines the path to understanding the true nature of the self.
 - **Stotras (Devotional Hymns)**:

- **Nirvana Shatakam:** Also known as Atma Shatakam, this hymn delineates the realization of the self as distinct from the body and mind.
- **Bhaja Govindam:** A devotional composition emphasizing the importance of devotion and spiritual practice in one's life.
- **Commentaries on Sanatana Dharma:**
 - **Dakshinamurti Stotra:** A hymn to Lord Dakshinamurti, it explains the significance of the guru in one's spiritual journey.
- **Travel and Teachings:**
 - Shankaracharya is also known for his extensive travels across India to engage in philosophical debates and establish monastic centers (mathas) in various parts of the country.
 - These mathas continue to propagate Advaita Vedanta teachings to this day.

Mandhata island

- The Mandhata island, nestled on the Narmada River, is home to two of the 12 Jyotirlingas: Omkareshwara (located on the south side of the island) and Amareshwara.
 - The area is close to Mahakaleshwara Jyotirlinga at Ujjain, located 110 km to the northwest.
- The island is dotted with Shaivite, Vaisnavite, and Jain temples dating back to the 14th and 18th centuries.

News Summary: Adi Shankaracharya statue at Omkareshwar

How was the project conceptualised?

- In February 2017, CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced the construction of a 108-foot-tall Adi Shankaracharya statue, a Shankar Museum, and the Acharya Shankar International Institute of Advaita Vedanta.
- The metal for building the statue was collected from people across more than 23,000 grama panchayats.
- **Larsen and Toubro** was awarded an Engineering Procurement, and Construction (EPC) contract to construct the Statue of Oneness.
- The Statue of Oneness is intended to endure for more than 500 years, while the museum building is designed to have a service life of 100 years.

What are the features of the project?

- The multi-metal Adi Shankaracharya statue is installed atop Mandhata Parvat hill, facing southwards towards the Narmada River.
- This statue stands atop a 54-feet pedestal, supported by a 27-feet lotus petal base which is made of red stone.

- The idol weighs 100 tons and has been installed on a 75-foot-high platform.
- It is made up of bronze that contains 88% copper, 4% zinc and 8% tin and its internal structure is made up of high-quality steel.
- At the base of the statue is the Shankar Stambh, which features wooden domes and stone pillars with carvings depicting 32 stories related to Acharya Shankar.

What are the other projects?

- **Ekatma Dham** will include the Advaita Lok museum.
 - The Ekatma Dham will feature a mosaic of architectural styles, including Nagara, Dravidian, Oriya, Maru-Gurjara, Hoysala, North Indian-Himalayan, and Kerala styles.
 - **Acharya Shankar International Institute of Advaita Vedanta** is being built to promote the study and understanding of Advaita Vedanta.
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Q1) What is Advaita Vedanta?

Advaita Vedanta is a school of Hindu philosophy that teaches non-duality, or the absence of separation between the subject and object.

Q2) Where does Narmada River originate?

The Narmada River originates from the Amarkantak Plateau in Madhya Pradesh, India.

Source: [Madhya Pradesh CM unveils Adi Shankaracharya statue at Omkareshwar: Its story, significance | Sankaracharya.org](#)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/adi-shankaracharya-2/>

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