



## **A Guide to Uddiyana<sup>1</sup> (Ujjain)**

*by Kyapje Chatral Rinpoche*

If on the way to Bhopal<sup>2</sup> you find yourself at Sanchi,<sup>3</sup> then you are already nearly in Uddiyana. Sanchi is a wonderful place. There is convenient, low cost accommodation near the railway station, and trains run from here to Uddiyana.<sup>4</sup> Once you get to Uddiyana, you will find government taxis at the bus station, and guided tours can be arranged as early as six in the morning. The tour guides are specific to Uddiyana, and—if you understand Hindi—they can give an excellent introduction to each of the sites. It would be a very good idea to visit this place at least once. You can also get there by rickshaw quite cheaply.

At the central temple of Mahakaleshwar, one should behold the naturally-arisen spirit stone of Mahakala, which lies below ground.<sup>5</sup>

Secondly, there is a cave of solid rock called Bharthari Gupha,<sup>6</sup> which is also an amazing sight. Long ago, while one of the kings of Uddiyana<sup>7</sup> was resting in samadhi here, local spirits began to cause him trouble. A lightning bolt struck a pillar, splitting it down the middle. The mighty king held it up with his hands, leaving an extremely blessed handprint in the stone. To this day, incredibly, one can see the two parts of the pillar still suspended in the air.

Thirdly, close by, there is a statue of Bhairava, Lord of Death, depicted drinking alcohol. Those who know this site bring beer or liquor as offerings to the statue.<sup>8</sup> The surrounding area is dotted with some impressive statues; all of these are forms of Buddhist deities, ultimately. Additionally, there is place called Vajra Cave, and a stupa surrounded by dense shrubbery and trees. It resembles a small hill, and you have to look carefully to recognize it.<sup>9</sup>

Then, to the northwest of Uddiyana, lies the Muslim land of Koteshwar.<sup>10</sup> This is also where you will find the amazing and blessed site of Sindhu Gyatsö Rolwé Ling, the Delightful Island of the Sindhu Ocean.<sup>11</sup> Most Indians know of this sacred place but do not actually journey there, since it is too remote. In order to get there from Uddiyana, you go to Indore,<sup>12</sup> to Ahmedabad,<sup>13</sup> to Bhuj, and then finally to Koteshwar—the island which in Tibetan is called Sindhu Gyatsö Rolwé Ling. When you go to this place on pilgrimage it is good to do so quietly. Otherwise, you may find that you run into difficulties. The main site is the

Sindhu Island, but there are also other recognizable sites in the vicinity, including some excellent caves.<sup>14</sup> It is said that every twelve years, out in the middle of the ocean, the water becomes endowed with the eight qualities.<sup>15</sup> As of now, there are still those who go out in boats to collect this water. Other than this, there is nothing else to say. Enjoy your time in this place, and all your queries will be answered.



### **Translation Origin**

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1 Throughout his guide, Kyapjé Chatral Rinpoché uses the Tibetan word “Orgyen” (o rgyan) which is normally used to refer to the country of Uddiayan. It becomes clear from Rinpoché’s site descriptions that, in this case, “Orgyen” refers to the city of Ujjain. An ancient city of central India, Ujjain is located in the Malwa region of the state of Madhya Pradesh, on the eastern bank of the Kshipra River. In ancient times the city was called “Ujjayini”. In the Mahabharata, “Ujjayini” was the capital of the Kingdom of Avanti.

2 Bhopal is the capital of the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh.

3 Sanchi lies 46 km to the north-east of Bhopal. Sanchi is famous for its great stupa, which enshrines relics of the Buddha and was commissioned by King Ashoka.

4 A few guest houses are located in the vicinity of Sanchi railway station. The distance from Sanchi to Ujjain is about 250 km. Depending on the train, the journey will take 5–8 hours. Buses are also available from Sanchi to Ujjain.

5 Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga, one of the most famous Hindu temples dedicated to Lord Shiva, is Ujjain’s central object of worship and pilgrimage. It is one of the twelve Jyotirlingams. It is believed that lord Shiva continuously resides at each of the twelve lingams in the form of light.

6 This is a reference to the Raja Bharthari Caves. The caves were used by followers of Guru Goraknath for meditation practice. They are thus a well-known pilgrimage site to followers of the Nath tradition. Bharthari was the ruler of Ujjain in the 1st century BC, before he renounced the world and abdicated in favor of his younger brother Vikramaditya. He became a follower of Guru Gorakhnath and went with his nephew Gopi Chand to the Guru’s hillside abode in northern Punjab. His younger brother Vikramaditya was a legendary emperor of ancient India. He is considered the ideal king, known for his generosity, courage, and patronage of scholars. There are many legends about Vikramaditya, including the ones in Baital Pachisi and Singhasan Battisi. Most of these legends present him as a universal ruler, with his capital at Ujjain.

7 This refers to King Bharthari. He is said to have meditated inside the cave for twelve years. According to legend, the king was faced with many obstacles during his retreat. He overcame them, and as a result Indra appeared to him.

8 The Kal Bhairav temple, located on the banks of the Shipra River, is dedicated to a statue of Bhairava, the guardian deity of the city. Liquor is one of the daily offerings made to the statue. Stores selling liquor for offering are found outside the temple’s entrance. Kal Bhairav is about 2 km away from the Raja Bharthari Cave.

9 The place called Vajra Cave most likely refers to the Patal Bhairav cave located on the left-hand side of the Kal Bhairav temple. An orange roof was built above the cave. The main cave itself is accessed through a small tunnel. Within the cave there is a natural stone image of Bhairavi and a Śivalingam. In the close vicinity of the Kal Bhairav temple are also several hills that could resemble stūpas.

10 Koreshwar is a bay island not far from the Indus river delta, where it meets the Arabian Sea. It is located near the mouth of Kori Creek, in the western part of the Kutch district of Gujarat, India. The name is derived from the Sanskrit words “koti” (ten million) and “ishvara” (gods). It is first mentioned in the writings of Xuanzang, who described it as “Kie-tsi-shi-fa-lo,” situated on the western border, close to the river Indus and to the “great ocean” of Kutch. Beal, Samuel. “Si-yu-ki. Buddhist Records of the Western World Vol II,” (London: Trübner, 1884), 276.

11 This is the island on which Guru Rinpoche miraculously took birth. As stated in

The Prayer in Seven Chapters, Chapter Six: The Prayer Requested by Prince Mutri Tsenpo: “On an island in the Sindhu ocean (sindhu gyatso rolpö tso ling), on a shimmering lotus flower, with no father, no mother, naturally arising, with no cause, no conditions, you came to bring benefit to beings. To you, wondrous and self-arising, we pray! To the Lotus-born Guru of Orgyen, we pray!”

12 Indore, 55 km south of Ujjain, is the largest city in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh.

13 Ahmedabad is the largest city in Gujarat, and its former capital. It is located 400 km to the west of Indore.

14 The island of Koteswar for the “Koteswar Mahadev Temple” that houses an especially sacred Śivaliṅgam. In times past, this temple was almost entirely cut off from the mainland by tidal creeks. Nowadays, however, it is connected by road. There is also the “Narayan Sarovar”, particularly sacred to Hindus, one of five lakes that are collectively called the “Pancha-Sarovar”. The other four lakes are “Mansarovar, Bindu Sarovar, Pampa Sarovar” and “Pushkar Sarovar”. The temple near the lake is dedicated to Lord Viṣṇu. The caves mentioned by Rinpoché are most likely the Siyot Caves. The Siyot Caves sometimes referred to as the Koteswar Buddhist Caves, are five rock-cut caves located close to Siyot village approximately 45 km away from the Koteswar island.

15 The eight qualities of the water—it is 1. crystal clear, 2. cool, 3. sweet, 4. light, 5. soft, 6. soothing to the stomach, 7. free of impurities, 8. soothing for the throat.