



An artists drawing of the ancient Martand temple built over a thousand years ago as an offering to 'Surya' god of the Sun and a name formed from 'marta' meaning 'death' and 'anda' meaning 'egg' as in the dead ( marta ) egg ( anda ) a name expressing how Aditi cast him away believing him dead and brought him to life only to see him die again.

The temple was built upon a hill with a view of the entire valley of Kashmir surrounded by a crystal clear lake and generations offered their worship to Martand who became the heart of Kashmir and their spiritual and material prosperity was seen as connected to the worship of this deity.

Sir Francis Younghusband, a famous explorer once commented "Martand has a very high place in the worlds great architectural designs, an example of not only the Kashmir architectural skill but being built at a fine place much prettier than the places of the 'Taj Mahal' and 'St Peters' which gives an insight into the greatness of the people of Kashmir".

Written by James Cooper

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The architect of this temple was 'King Lalitaditya' a powerful ruler of the Karkota empire which flourished for some 400 years and renowned as a great builder he constructed many temples to Siva and Visnu and his yearnings to create a monument of lasting beauty led him to create the temple of Martand.

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Kashmirian architecture flourished during the reign of King Lalitaditya and the British architect and scholar Sir Alexander Cunningham says 'the architectural remains of Kashmir are perhaps the most remarkable of the existing monuments of India'.

The temple was built in such a way that the sunlight would fall upon Surya during the day and throughout the temple were various wall carvings which depict the glories of the gods such as Lord Visnu, such as Gangadevi and such as Yamunadevi.



Martand resides within the ancient city of 'Anantnag' which has been inhabited for at least 5000 years and whose name is formed of 'ananta' meaning 'eternal' 'boundless' 'endless' and 'naga' meaning 'celestial snake' and this seems to be a description of 'Ananta Sesa'.

Throughout the region of Anantnag we find many place names which reflect the ancient Vedic and Sanskrit culture of India such as 'Nagabal' 'Maliknag' 'Kadipora' 'Sarnal Bala' 'Janglatmandi' 'Khanabal' 'Anchidora' 'Harnag' 'Hutmara' 'Ruhu' and 'Ashajipora'.

Nearby we find the Sesanag lake and the Amaranath cave whose name means the immortal ( amara ) lord ( natha ) a holy shrine which houses a Siva lingam formed by a stalagmite and another stalagmite represents Parvatti and another one represents Ganesh.



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The temple is a large, rectangular building with a prominent arched doorway and a smaller arched window above it. The walls are made of dark stone, and the roof is missing. To the left and right of the main structure are smaller ruins, including walls and columns. The temple is situated in a vast, open, and arid landscape with sparse vegetation. In the background, a range of low mountains is visible under a hazy sky.