

## SIYADONI - AN OLD TOWN

*The people who lived long ago, their houses and belongings and their lives and struggles are no more. Yet history seeks to give us glimpses into their lives. How can this be done? We try to do this with the help of the remains of the past.*

*Among the remains from the age of the samantas, inscriptions are the most important source of information. Inscriptions are messages engraved on stones, which can be read by everyone, that is, by those who can read the scripts in which they are written. These inscriptions enable historians to tell us what happened in the olden times.*

*However there is one problem. The information inscribed on the stones are not written in the way things are written in your textbook. Come, let us do an exercise in this chapter to see how historians get their information from inscriptions. In this chapter we shall study some inscriptions and see what we can learn about an old town and the people living in it.*



### An Old Town

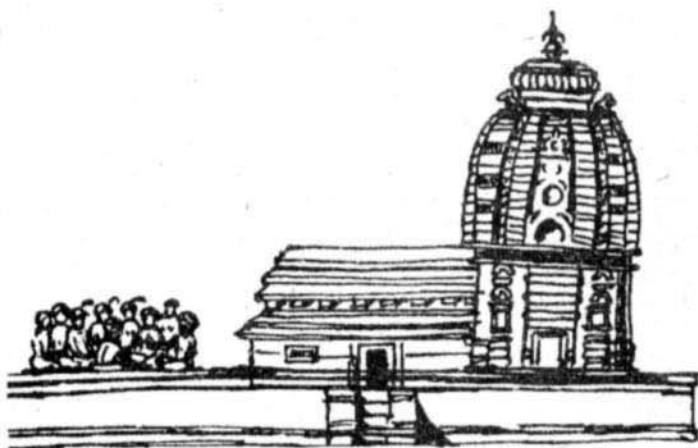
When we go to Jhansi from Bhopal, the train stops at a station called Lalitpur. There is a small village near Lalitpur called Siron Khurd. A long inscription was found in this village in 1887. When historians read it they discovered that around 900 AD there was a large town there. The inscription mentioned the name of the town as Siyadoni (pronounced as *see-ya-doe-nee*).

But today there is only a small village left there. There are just a few scattered remains of the temples of this town. It is possible that the whole town got destroyed and buried. This inscription is the only reminder of this flourishing town. Many interesting bits of information about the kings, traders, craftsmen, temples, houses, roads, and markets of Siyadoni are engraved in it. Come, let us also read and find out more about this lost town.

*How many years ago would this be?*

The inscription begins by recording an important event of that year. The inscription tells us that in 902 AD -

*Sangata's son Chanduka, a salt trader, built a temple for Narayana Bhattaraka in the southern part of the town. The people of the entire town gave some agricultural land as a gift to the temple. The land would provide for Narayana Bhattaraka's sandalwood, bath-requirements, incense, lamp, and food offerings.*



Many such instances have been mentioned in the inscriptions. Before reading further let us stop awhile.

- *At the end of this lesson there is an incomplete map of Sivadoni. Locate the Narayana Bhattaraka temple in it. (Narayana Bhattaraka means God Narayana.)*
- *Who built Narayana Bhattaraka's temple?*

### The Samanta and the Mandi

Now read about something that happened in 906 AD. According to the inscription :

*Mahapratihara Mahasamantadhipati Undabhata of Sivadoni informed all his officers that some gold coins would be supplied daily by the mandi ( main market) for Lord Naryana's worship .*

*This settlement will last as long as the Sun and the Moon exist. Five great sins will befall anyone who obstructs this arrangement. This settlement is signed by Undabhata.*



- What was the name of Siyadoni's samanta?
- What arrangements did he make to support regular worship in the temple?
- Look at the map and figure out the best place for the main market. Mark Siyadoni's mandi there.
- The samanta of Siyadoni must have had a palace too. Think of a suitable place and mark his palace on the map.

### Kandukas -The Sugar Makers

In 907 AD-

This is being settled in the presence of all the elders of the traders' committee and all the kandukas (sugar makers). Nagaka, a salt trader and the son of Chanduka, spent a lot of money to come to a settlement with 4-5 sugar makers that they would give a part of their produce to the temple everyday. Signed by Nagaka.



In 907 AD it was Chanduka's son and not Chanduka himself who was making the grant. In this document you have read about some new people. It is possible that these sugar makers were living together in the same street or locality.

- Mark the locality of the kandukas or the sugar makers in the map.
- Who was Nagaka? With whom did Nagaka make an agreement to give donations to the temple and what was the agreement? In whose presence did Nagaka make this agreement?

### Markets and Shops

In 909 AD,

Chanduka, the trader, has donated his *vitthi* (shop) in Prasanna Hatta (Prasanna market) to the Narayana temple. To the east of this shop is Subhaditya's shop, to the south is Bhattadeva's house, in the west is Chuan's shop and to the north is the Hattaratfiya (market street).

In the same year,

Tambulika (betel leaf seller) Keshava who is Bateshwara's son gave his *vitthi* (shop) which is in Chatura Hatta (Chatur Market) to the temple as a donation.

- Whose shops did the Narayana Bhattaraka temple get in donation in the year 909 AD? In which markets were these shops located?
- Mark Chatura Hatta on the map.
- Also mark Prasanna Hatta and Chanduka's shop along with their surrounding features in the map.
- Why did Chanduka give a description in the inscription of all the things which surrounded the shop he had donated?

In 947 AD,

*Sutradhara Jejaka, Visiaka, Bhaluaka, Jaguka and other silakutas (stone cutters) decided that they would give some Drama (coins) to God Narayana on each stone slab that they sold.*

Perhaps in those days the houses, palaces, and temples of Siyadoni were made of stone and these stone cutters must have helped in making stone building blocks.



*Purandhara installed an idol of Chakraswami (Vishnu) in the temple of Narayana Bhattaraka. The tailikas (oil pressers) Keshava, Durgaditya, Ujonek, Tundiya, and others, decided to donate a certain amount of oil from every oil mill for lighting lamps in front of the temple's deity.*

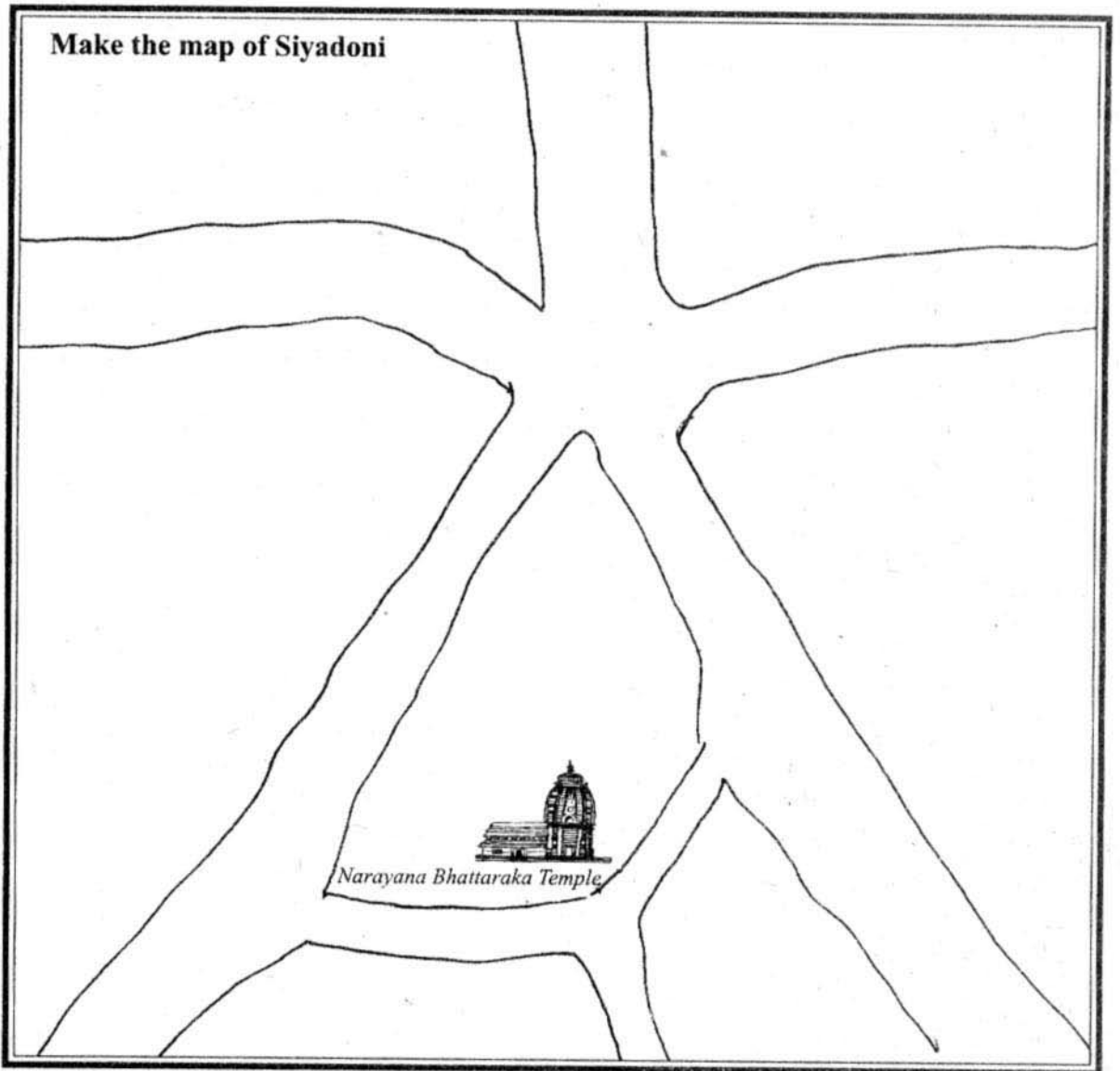
- *Mark the localities of the stone cutters and oil pressers in the map.*
- *In what way did the stone cutters and oil pressers of Siyadoni give donations to the temple?*

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So you have had a view of a town one thousand years old and formed your own impressions of the people, their work, and their beliefs. Is there a town near your place which is 1000 years old? Life in that town may have been similar to life in Siyadoni. Now that you have seen something of the way of the life in a thousand year old town, can you answer these questions?

1. *Who do you think was the most important and influential person in Siyadoni? Write a few sentences about him.*
2. *What was the layout of Siyadoni like? How many markets were there - one or many? What were the names of the markets?*
3. *In those days what were markets known as? Bazaar is a Persian word which was introduced by the Turks in India. The term 'market' was introduced by the British.*
4. *Were there only shops in the bazaars of Siyadoni? Were shops and houses built next to each other or were they built separately?*
5. *'Dukan' is also a Persian word. What were the shops called in the Siyadoni inscription?*
6. *You met some of the traders of Siyadoni. What were their names? What were the things that they traded in?*
7. *What kinds of articles did the craftsmen of Siyadoni make?*
8. *Do the names of people of those times sound different from the names of today?*
9. *Were donations made to the temple only as coins? Give some examples.*
10. *In those days money was not known as Rupees. What was it called then?*
11. *Were the temples donated land, too? Give examples. How did it help in the worship of the God?*
12. *How did the artisans of the town make donations to the temple?*
13. *What kind of gifts did the bhogpatis of the town make?*
14. *Does it seem that people from nearby villages used to come to Siyadoni?*
15. *What is the period for which we get information about Siyadoni?*

### Make the map of Siyadoni



About 900 AD many towns were coming up in our country. Many of them declined like Siyadoni declined but others are still flourishing today. In Madhya Pradesh itself there are many such towns.

- *During the time of Ashoka there were just three major cities in Madhya Pradesh. Can you recollect their names?*
- *By 1000 AD many towns emerged in M.P. Locate them in the map given on the next page.*

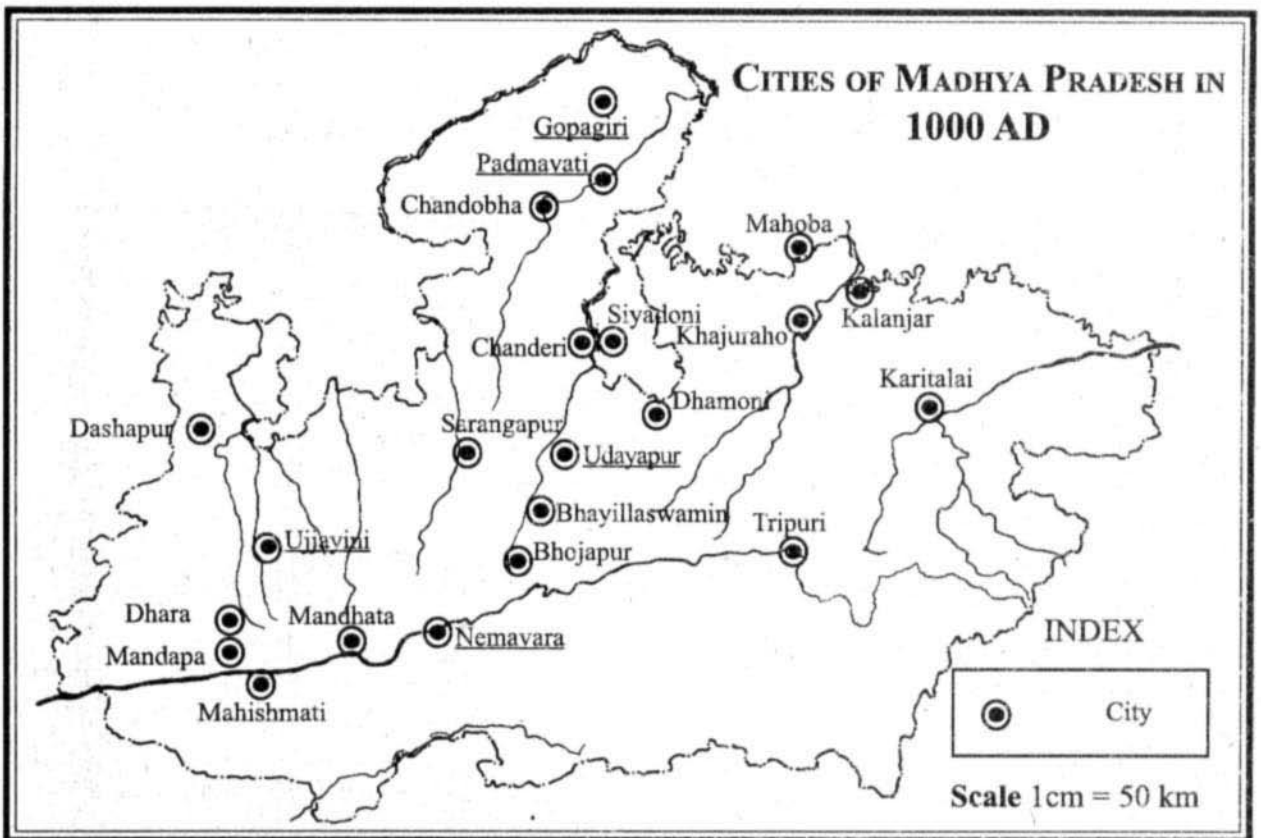
A number of these towns are no more, like Siyadoni. Today only their ruins remain - broken temples, mounds of bricks and stones and broken statues scattered far and wide.

- *Locate the city of Mandapa in the map.*

This city was situated on a hill. Mandapa was the capital of a very large kingdom. But today apart from the ruins there is just a small village there. Today this place is known as Mandu. Bhojpur was also a town like this. Even today the ruins of Bhojpur temple can be seen near Bhopal.

However, there were cities which with the passage of time shifted from their original place to

## CITIES OF MADHYA PRADESH IN 1000 AD



a new place. How can a city move to another place? But this is possible. You may have heard that a certain village was originally situated elsewhere and now has moved to this place.

In the same way even cities change their places. Locate the town of Bhayillaswami in the map. This is one such town. It has shifted 2-3 kilometers from its original place and is now known as Vidisha. The ruins of the old town can be seen just outside the present town.

There are still some towns which flourish at their original place, but their names have changed. For instance, the capital of the Chandela kingdom was Kharjooravahaka, but today its name is Khajuraho.

- Given below are the modern names of some cities. Can you identify these in the map and write the old names of these cities? These cities are underlined in the map.

No.	New Name	Old Name
1.	<u>Nemawar</u>	
2.	<u>Maheshwar</u>	
3.	<u>Dhar</u>	
4.	<u>Mandsaur</u>	
5.	<u>Udaipur</u>	
6.	<u>Ujjain</u>	
7.	<u>Gwalior</u>	
8.	<u>Pawaya</u>	
9.	<u>Chanderi</u>	