



INTACH

Name -----

Class -----

School -----

City -----

CITIES AND THEIR LESSER KNOWN MONUMENTS



Banaji Limji Agiary



Banaji Limji Agiary

Introduction:

Mumbai's oldest Zoroastrian fire temple — the Banaji Limji Agiary, in Banaji Street, Fort, houses Atash Adaran, the second grade of fire.

Situated within Mumbai's historic Fort neighborhood, the Seth Banaji Limji Agiary is Mumbai's oldest surviving Zoroastrian fire temple. It was Mumbai's second fire temple at the time of its construction.

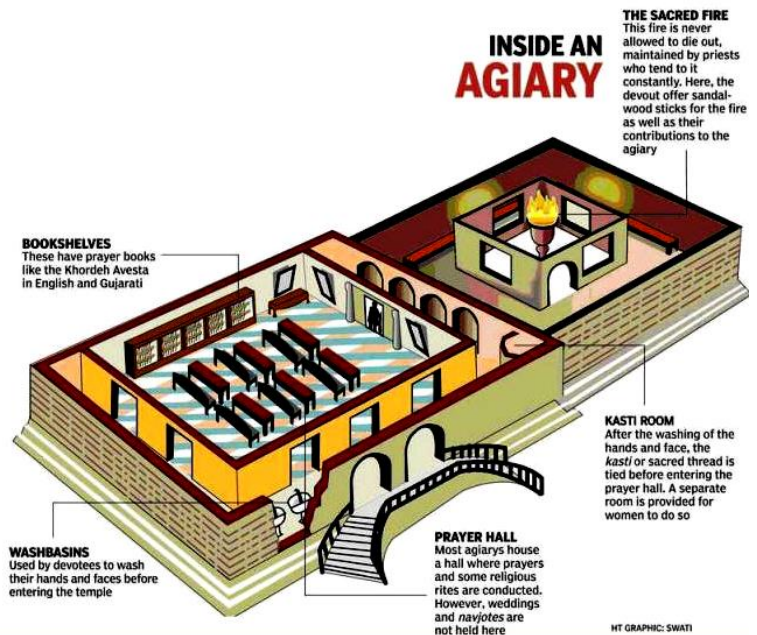
DID YOU KNOW? Zoroastrianism is an ancient Iranian (Persian), Central Asian religion founded by Zoroaster. It is regarded as world's oldest religion and Zoroastrians are often called dar-e mehr in Persian (the religion's worshippers).

In Zoroastrianism, fire and water are sacred agents of purity. One unique aspect of the Zoroastrian religion is the use of fire in their temples, which are seen as symbolic of the divinity.

With only 27 fire temples found outside of India, the highest concentration of fire temples can be found in Mumbai. There are around 50 fire temples in Mumbai and about 100 in the rest of India.

History and Background

Established in 1709 by Seth Banaji Limji, a successful Parsi businessman who arrived in Mumbai bearing the temple's sacred fire from Kolkata. The Fire Temples grand façade is an architectural marvel that fascinates history and art enthusiasts. The temple was damaged due to a fire in the fort (1803). However, the structure was rebuilt by 1845, with contributions from the city's Parsi community.



Inside an Agiary - a cut-out graphic
Source: Hindustan Times. Graphics: Swati

Did you know? Built Heritage refers to buildings, artifacts, structures, areas and precincts that are of historic, aesthetic, architectural or cultural significance and should include natural features within such areas or precincts of environmental significance or scenic beauty such as sacred groves, hills, hillocks, water bodies (and the areas adjoining the same), open areas, wooded areas, so on (INTACH).



DID YOU KNOW?

Zoroastrian fire temples are built around the fire housed within their structures.

There are 3 types of Zoroastrian Fire Temples:

- Atash Bahram (Atash Behram- highest grade)
- Atash Adaran
- Atash Dadgah (lowest grade)

The Banaji Limji Agiary houses Atash Adaran and is the second grade of fire temple.

Banaji Limji Agiary

The Banaji Limji Agiary close to Horniman Circle is the oldest surviving agiary. It is more than 300 years old. It has two huge winged bulls on either side and the motif of a fravashi or angel just above the doorway. Banaji Agiary, Fort, Mumbai is officially the oldest surviving fire temple in the city.

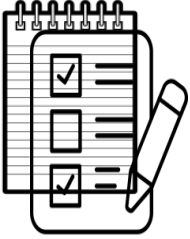
During the Arab conquest of Persia, Zoroastrians fled to India's Gujarat and Pakistan's Sindh regions in an effort to preserve their religion. The 18th century saw Parsis—descendents of the Iranian Zoroastrians—settle in Kolkata and other parts of India. From the 18th century onward, Mumbai became the religious center and headquarters for Parsis and their fire temples.

According to historic records, fire from a lightning strike was maintained by a priest in the home of Mehrwanji Limji, a successful businessman in Kolkata for two years before being transported with to Mumbai. The Mumbai Agiary was established in 1709 by Limji, who brought the fire from Mumbai to initiate the temple and its sacred fire. The architecture of the temple resembles a fortress, with fire motifs on the front façade.

ZOROASTRIAN RELIGIOUS TEXTS - THE AVESTA AND ZAND

Եւրոպայի քաղաքներէն Մեհրան ինչպէս ինչպէս
 ինչպէս ինչպէս ինչպէս ինչպէս ինչպէս
 ինչպէս ինչպէս ինչպէս ինչպէս ինչպէս
 ինչպէս ինչպէս ինչպէս ինչպէս ինչպէս
 ինչպէս ինչպէս ինչպէս ինչպէս ինչպէս





Explore Zoroastrian Heritage ...

List some historic Zoroastrian heritage temples in India

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



Did you know? The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 defines an '**Ancient Monument**' as any structure, erection or monument, or any tumulus or place of interment, or any cave, rock-sculpture, inscription or monolith which is of historical, archaeological or artistic interest and which has been in existence for not less than 100 years (Ministry of Culture, Government of India).

Write about a historic fire temple in Mumbai. Choose an architectural feature you find most attractive. You may draw it too.

Did you know?

Festival Celebrations at Fire Temples-

Date of establishing the Atash Behram is celebrated every year according to Zoroastrian calendar. Adur month and salgiri on the twentieth day of the month. In addition to, the Parsi New Year held in August. Parsee New Year (Navroze) too.

Imagine you are being taken on a school excursion to the Fort District of Mumbai.
Write a post card to your friend describing a 300 year old historic fire temple there.



Content, Research, and Development:

INTACH Heritage Education and Communication Service
INTACH, 71, Lodi Estate, New Delhi-110003

References:

- <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/parsi-fire-temple>
- <https://hi-in.facebook.com/MumbaiHeritage/photos/seth-banaji-limji-shenshai-agiary>
- <https://www.gettyimages.in/photos/agiary?mediatype=photography>
- <http://www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/temples/agiary.htm>
- <https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai/banaji-limji-agiary-mumbai-s-oldest-fire-temple>
- <http://www.jiyoparsi.org/download/Jiyo%20Parsi%20Report0418-1218.pdf>
- <https://www.lonelyplanet.in/articles/5955/its-navroz-lets-parsi>
- <https://www.sworld.co.uk/02/1912/photoalbum/seth-banaji-limji-agiary-is-mumbai-s>
- <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/mumbais-oldest-architectural-landmark>