



INTACH

MOSQUES OF INDIA

CHERAMAN JUMA MOSQUE, KERALA



The Cheraman Juma Masjid is located in Kodun Gallur in Kerala. Located on the Western coast, this mosque faces the Arabian Sea. It is a very fascinating source for many people and has been an active place of worship for over a thousand years.

The last Chera Kings, the Cheraman Perumals, had abdicated the throne, embraced Islam and ultimately left for Mecca. The king had written out letters to his relatives in Kerala and on the basis of his wish, Malik-ibn-Dinar and a few other Arab traders got the permission to build Mosques in Kerala. Out of these, the Cheraman Mosque was the first in the series.

Some people believe that the construction of the Cheraman Juma Masjid took place during the last few years of the life of Prophet Mohammed. These mosques that were built in the coastal areas were originally made for the Arab merchants who vividly arrived at the coast.

It is believed that the Cheraman Juma Mosque was built by Malik Dinar who was an Arab propagator of Islam. It is said that he was a follower and a contemporary of Prophet Mohammed.

LEGEND BEHIND THE COSTRUCTION

There are many stories about the origin of the mosque. The most popular version accounts how there once lived a Hindu king who had a vision that the moon had split into two halves. As he grew concerned that the dream was a warning, he asked his court astrologers to interpret it.

The astrologers could not provide the king with an explanation that could satisfy him and hence, the problem remained unsolved. Then arrived a group of Arab traders at this port which is today India's Southern state of Kerala. It was the traders who explained to the king that his vision was probably a reference to one of the miracles performed by the Prophet.

This king, Cheraman Perumal, gave up his throne to embrace Islam. The king left for Mecca and after many years decided to return home, but he fell ill and died on his way. However, Malik Dinar and his companions completed the journey on the king's behalf. They were the ones to carry a series of letters written by Cheraman Perumal asking the local rulers of Kerela for their permission to build the first mosque in the area.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Cheraman Juma Masjid is believed to be the first mosque buikt in 629 C.E. in India and also the world's second oldest.



Other than the long history of this church, its distinct Kerala-style architecture and legacy, the mosque is also a centre of attraction for people for its ancient oil lamp. It is believed that it has been burning continuously ever since the mosque was built- *for over a thousand years!!* People visiting the mosque often bring oil to add to the lamp.

The mosque has been renovated several times, with the first time being in the 11th century C.E. Yet, the inner hall along with this ancient lamp has been preserved in their initial form throughout the years.

The mosque is also home to a museum for people who are interested in learning about its history. The mosque also displays replicas of the mosque to show the evolution of its architecture over time.



ACTIVITY:

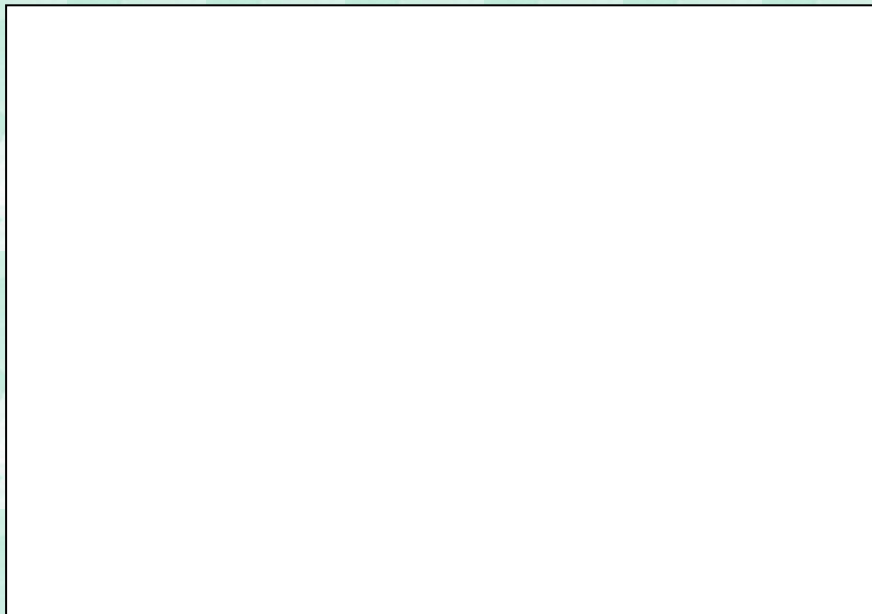
Find out if there is a religious shrine in your region with a museum. Note some interesting observations.

The Cheraman Juma Mosque is painted with baby blue colour and a coral tile roof. There are two minarets and a spacious courtyard which dates back to its origin.

ACTIVITY

- A. Visit a religious shrine in your area that contains ancient artefacts or artefacts. Find out about its history by talking to the people.

- B. Make a sketch of the shrine or paste a picture of it in the box below.



REFERENCES

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