INTACH

JAIN TEMPLES OF INDIA:

PALITANA JAIN TEMPLES



Palitana group of temples, in Bhavnagar district of Gujarat is known for being the largest cluster of Jain temples. There are in total 863 temples from base to the peak of the Shatrunjaya hill. The city with the same name was known previously as Padliptapur. It is also referred to as the 'city of temples'.

History

Built over different centuries, the temples of Palitana are a lesson in history. Historically speaking, the earlier temples of Palitana were built under the Royal patronage of King Kumarapala of the Solanki Dynasty in the 11th century CE. However, they were destroyed in the 13th century by the invading Muslim Turks. They were again restored in different periods of time by different wealthy Jain merchants.

The Shatrunjaya Hill is revered by the Jains. As per the Shatrunjaya Mahatmya – the holy Jain texts – the 1st Tirthankara Rishabh had delivered his first sermon here and had successfully sanctified the hills. Later, his grandson, Pundarika is said to have attained nirvana here in the Shatrunjaya hills.

About the Temples and Architecture



The temples of Palitana showcase exquisite architecture and are heavily ornamented and adorned. There are around 863 large and small temples. The larger temples have big marble halls with columns and towers, and plenty of openings. The interiors are very intricately and finely carved which have geometric lace designs, elaborately carved ceilings and clustered forms of canopies. They are situated in separate enclosures, surrounded by high fortified walls. The holiest and most important temple is the temple of Adishwar. The Adinath temple, dating to the 16th century venerates Rishabh and is considered the grandest of all. It has ornate architectural motifs. It also has a large jewellery collection which can be visited with permission of the temple trust.



The Chaumukh temple, built in 1616, has a striking four-faced Adinath image on a white pedestal. Each face is turned towards the four cardinal directions. The Vimal Shah temple is a square structure with towers.

The other prominent temples are - Saraswati Devi temple, Narsinh Kesharji temple, and the Samavasaran temple.

There is also a modern temple, Samvatsarana which is built at the base of the hills of the main temple complex.

Shri Vishal Jain museum – This museum is located at the base of Shatrunjaya hills and has a collection of Jain artefacts that are more

than 500 years old. Ranging from ancient manuscripts written on palm leaves to excavated idols dating back to thousands of years, this place is a treat for history lovers. The museum also has interesting information on Jain history and exhibits on Lord Mahavir's life.



DID YOU KNOW…
A stamp of Rs.15/- was issued on Shatrunjaya Temple of Palitana on 15th August 1949. This stamp was part of first archeological definitive series of 16 stamps.

ACTIVITY

1. How many temples can you name from the Palitana group of Jain Temples?

2. Write a short brief on the architectural style of the temples here. Also mention which one is your favourite and why?

3. Draw a sketch of the Chaumukh temple.

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