

Jain Temple and Kirtti Stambha



Padmini Palace



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# CHITTAURGARH



Vijaya Stambha



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

## CHITTAURGARH

Chittaur(24°53'74"39"), the ancient Chitrakuta, was the capital of Mewar and the centre of Rajput policy from 7<sup>th</sup> century to mid 16<sup>th</sup> century AD. This fort was built by Chitrangad of the Moris in 7<sup>th</sup> century AD and later on, Maharana Kumbha (AD 1433-68) made extensive additions and alterations. It has been a witness to the rule of several dynasties such as the Moris (Mauryas) (7-8<sup>th</sup> century AD), Pratiharas (9<sup>th</sup> century AD), Paramaras (10-11<sup>th</sup> century AD), Solankis (12<sup>th</sup> century AD) followed by Guhilots or Sisodias. During its long history, the fort suffered three sacks- the first in AD 1303 by Ala-ud-Din Khalji, the second in AD 1535 by Bahadur Shah of Gujarat and the third by Akbar in AD 1567-68 and each time, the Jauhar was performed - when women and children immolated themselves on a huge funeral pyre which asserted the heroic spirit of the Rajputs. Thereafter, the capital of Mewar was moved to Udaipur. The eventful history of Chittaurgarh and its rich monumental heritage suggest the importance of the royal seat of Mewar. The magnificent monuments viz. palaces, temples, commemorative towers, havelis, water reservoirs, chhatris, gateways, etc. are fine examples of the Rajput architecture.

**Vijaya Stambha** : To commemorate the victory over Sultan of Malwa, this magnificent stambha (37.19 metre high) was built and consecrated by Maharana Kumbha in AD 1448. Dedicated to Vishnu, it has nine stories distinctly marked with openings and balconies at every face of each storey. The interior staircase winds alternately through the central chamber and surrounding gallery. The inscribed slabs in the uppermost storey contain genealogy of the rulers of Chittaur from Hamir to Rana Kumbha. The entire tower is covered with architectural ornaments and inscribed images of gods and goddesses, seasons, weapons, musical instruments, etc. Its inscribed sculptures are a veritable text-book of Hindu iconography. The portraits of the architect of this tower Jaita and his three sons Napa, Puja and Poma carved in the fifth storey.

**Kirtti Stambha** : Dedicated to Adinatha, the first Jaina Tirthankara, this elegant stambha was built by Shresthi Jija and Puryasing of Bagherwal clan during the reign of Maharana Kumbha by the persuasion of his daughter. This six storied tower (24.5m high) stands on a square platform. A central staircase winds up a square shaft through six stories to a small pavilion of elegant design, the roof of which rests on twelve columns. Large standing images of Tirthankaras are placed in four niches on the lowest story. Hundreds of small figures are carved on the upper stories. Standing next to the tower is a 14<sup>th</sup> century Jaina temple. Raised on high jagodi, it comprises of a sanctum and a mandapa. Its walls are beautifully carved.

**Kumbha Palace** : This magnificent palace provides faint glimpses of pristine glory of typical domestic architecture of the Rajputs. Maharana

Kumbha (AD 1433-68) made several additions and alterations in earlier palace. The palace is approached through two gateways to the east - Badi Pol and Tripol. These gates lead into open space to the south of the palace and to darikhana. A small doorway on the back of darikhana gives access to main apartments, Surya Gokhra, Zanana Mahal, Kanwar Pade ka Mahal, other residential structures and open courts. Built of dressed stones, the exterior walls have decorations include sculptured bands serving as string course and large flower head bosses.

**Padmini Palace** : This Palace is of immense historical importance in the history of Mewar. Associated with Rani Padmini, this beautiful building stands in the northern margin of the Padmini lake. It is said that here Rana Ratan Singh showed a glimpse of legendary beauty of his wife Padmini to Ala-ud-Din Khalji through a mirror. After which, Ala-ud-Din Khalji went to the extent of ravaging Chittaur in order to possess her. In the middle of the lake, there is a three-storeyed structure with arched openings locally known as Jal Mahal.

**Ratan Singh Palace** : This palace is attributed to Rana Ratan Singh II (AD 1528-31). Located along the Ratneswar Talab it is rectangular on plan and enclosed by a high wall. The main entrance is facing east through a lofty arch crowned with two pillared chhatris. The palace comprises of courtyards surrounded by rooms, towers, deoris, etc. Darikhana or audience hall with fine balcony overlooking the reservoir is on the eastern part of second storey. A temple known as Ratneswar Mahadeva is on the north of the main gateway, which comprises of a garbhagriha, an antarala and a mandapa. The exterior of the temple is beautifully carved.

**Fateh Prakash Palace** : This magnificent double storied palace was built by Maharana Fateh Singh (AD 1884-1930). It is an edifice with a tower on each of its four corners crowned by domed chhatris. In the centre of the spacious courtyard is a large cistern. This palace is a grand specimen of modern Indian architecture and presently is being used as museum with an exquisite example of sculptures from temples and monuments in the fort.

**House of Alha Kabra** : It is on the other side of Topkhana and has a hall of vaulted roof supported on massive masonry pillars and arches having entrances on the north and south crowned with quasi arch with lintel supported on brackets. This hall forms a part of the house of one of the officials of Chittaur.

**Houses of Fatta and Jaimal** : After a short ascent from Gau-mukha along the rampart are the houses of the famous defenders of Chittaur, who fell bravely during the seizure of the fort by Akbar in AD 1556. The house of Jaimal, the ancestor of the Thakur of Badnor, comprises of a hall with two rooms on either sides and two rooms in the second story, one party

collapsed. The house has vaulted roofs with walls slightly tapering inwards. To the south-east and close by is the house of Fatta built in Rajput style having beautiful projected balconies decorated with blue enamel work. Main entrance is from the east. The house complex comprises of two apartments. Apartment for female is on west whereas the male apartment is on the south. The main building has a roofless hall flanked by a room on the west, upper part of which has fallen down. The room on the east has an image of Fatta while the west one is converted into a shrine dedicated to Devi.

**Samadhiavara Temple :** Dedicated to Siva, this temple was built by Bhoja Paramara in the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. It was renovated by Mokel, in VS 1485 (AD 1428). The temple consists of a garbhagriha, an antarala and a mandapa with three porticos on its north, south and west. The colossal image of Trimurti Siva is enshrined in the sanctum. The interior and exterior of the temple are elaborately carved with figures of gods and goddesses and other decorations. Besides, there are several smaller shrines of early date. To the south of it, a long staircase descends to the sacred Gaumukha.

**Kalika Mata Temple :** Originally dedicated to Surya, this temple was built by Raja Manabhangha in the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD. It consists of a *pancha-ratha* sanctum with an ambulatory having three transepts, a vestibule, a closed mandapa with lateral transepts and a porch. The doorjamb of sanctum is carved with figures of Surya and other deities. The ceiling panels of the mandapa are decorated with divinities and flying celestials. Kalika Mata or goddess Kali is worshipped here and fair is held every year in the month of Vaisakh.

**Kumbhaswamin Temple :** Originally dedicated to Varaha, this temple was renovated by Maharana Kumbha (AD 1433-68). Raised on high plinth, it comprises of a sanctum, a mandapa, a portico and an open *pradakshinapath*. The sanctum appears to be original and shows bold podium mouldings decorated with sculptured niches on the projections. The roof of the mandapa is in the form of pyramid while the sanctum is crowned by tall sikhara. The interior of mandapa is composed of twenty pillars. The image of varaha is in the principle niche on the back of the shrine. In front of the temple is an image of *garuda* under a canopy supported on four pillars. On the south, there is another smaller shrine called Meera-Mandir. In front of this is a four-pillared *chhatra*, said to have been built in the memory of her guru.

**Sat-Bis Deori :** This group of twenty seven Jain temples locally known as Sat-Bis Deori, built within a compound wall in VS 1505 (1448). This temple complex stands on a high jagad and consists of a shrine with three mandapas facing west, a miniature shrine to its north and south and a corridor of cell shrines surrounding the central shrine and its courtyard. The central shrine has a sanctum, vestibule, mandapa, sabha-mandapa,

trika-mandapa and mukha-mandapa. The exterior part of the *jangha* is adorned with sculptures of gods, goddesses and apsaras. Close to the group on the east is a pair of shrine facing east.

**Abdhuji ka Temple :** Built in VS 1546-47 (AD 1489-90), this beautiful temple is dedicated to Siva, known as Abdhutnatha Temple. It has a garbhagriha and a closed roofless mandapa with attached porticos on the north, west and south. The porticos are also found missing. The floor of the garbhagriha is deeper than that of mandapa and is approachable by four descending steps. Siva-linga is enshrined in the centre and a huge bust with three colossal faces on the back wall of the sanctum.

**Neelkantha Mahadeva Temple :** This temple is very close to the Suraj Pol. It has undergone modern separations. The old plinth still exists.

**Kukresvara Mahadeva Temple :** This magnificent temple stands on the western margin of Mataji ka Kund and Kukresvara reservoir. It is said that the temple was built by Rana Kukresvara in VS 811 (AD 755) but Rana Kumbha rebuilt the present temple and the reservoir.

**Annapurna and Banmata Temples :** Located to the north of Charbhuj and Lakshmi-Narayana, both these temples are facing west. The larger one, to the north is known as temple of goddess Annapurna. It was built by Rana Hamir Singh (AD 1326-64). The image worshipped in the shrine is that Lakshmi with lotus flower in her hand and an elephant on each side of her face. In the principal niche facing north there is another image of Lakshmi. One more image of goddess Lakshmi is shown in the wall north of the flight of steps leading to the western entrance of the enclosure. In the north wall just out of the enclosure, there is a fragmentary inscription (date lost) bears the names of several Ranas, the last being that of Banvir and it records the grant of some villages. A small temple of Banmata, the tutelary goddess of Maharana is on the south side. The image enshrined in the shrine bears *ankusa* and *pash* in the upper hands and bow and arrow in the lower ones.

**Tulja Bhawani Temple :** This beautiful temple is just near Purohit ki Haveli consisting of a shrine and a pillared mandapa. It was built by Banvir (AD 1535-40).

**Patalesvara Temple :** The temple is very close to the Topkhana and facing west. It consists of three shrines and a long common corridor in front supported on four rows of pillars and a portico. The central shrine has a *sahasra-linga* of Siva, while those on the left and right are without any image. The inscription engraved on the northern end of the ceiling of the corridor records the construction of the temple in VS 1622, Asad Sudi 5 (AD 1565).

**Sringar Chauri** : Dedicated to Shantinatha, this richly carved shrine is located in between the house of Alha Kabra and Banbir's wall. It has two entrances, one on the north and the other on the west, while the other parts of the wall on the east and south are closed withjali work. On the middle of the floor there is an elevated square platform, upon which are four carved pillars one at each corner carrying four beams over which it was probably intended to build a domed roof or canopy. The pillar close to the western door bears an inscription stating that it was built by one Velaka, son of Kola, the treasurer of Maharana Kumbha in VS 1505 (AD 1448) and was consecrated by one Jina Segar Suri of Kharatara Gachha. Besides, there is another small shrine on the north. There is an image inscription in one of the principal niches dated VS 1232(AD 1175).

**Brick Temple** : This temple is sandhara prasade and faces east. It comprises of a square sanctum, an antero and a sabha-mandapa in axial plan. The sanctum is roofed by brick sikhara of latin type. It appears that the mandapa was added around tenth century AD.

**Jata-Sankar Temple** : This temple, dedicated to Siva, is located just on back of Kumbhashyama Temple near the fortwall. Built on a high platform and facing east, this edifice consists of a sanctum, an antero, a sabha-mandapa with lateral transepts, a mukhamandapa and a separate nandi mandapa. The entire temple is raised on a moulded pitha. The sabha-mandapa has a nabhichanda ceiling and samvarana roof. The sanctum has a curvilinear sikhara, the top of which is missing.

**Gau-Mukha** : Descending through winding steps from south gateway of Mahasati complex is the Gau-mukha or Sas-Bahu ka Kund. Originally, it was known as Mandakini Kund. Here the water coming out from cow-mouth carved in stone set up in the wall of the pillared hall. An enormous female bust, carved in stone with a looking glass in her hand, is in the wall of the hall.

**Mahasati** : Around Samadisvara temple is the Mahasati, where the rulers of Chittaur and their wives were cremated. This is surrounded by a thick wall with three gateways adorned with stone carvings on the north, east and south. In the south gateway, built into a framed niche in the wall is a fine large inscribed slab dated VS 1331 (AD 1274) of the time of Rawal Samar Singh bearing the genealogy of the Guhilot

**Memorials** : Numerous memorials have been erected at different locations. Bagh Singh's Memorial is erected in front of Pagda Pol on the left side. It is raised on a square chabutra with an erected stone, marking the spot where during the seize of Chittaur by Bahadur Shah of Gujarat in AD 1535, Bagh Singh, the great grand son of Rana Mokal and the chief of Deolia (Pratapgarh) was killed. Kalla and Jaimal Memorials are built a

little way up between Bhairav Pol and Hanuman Pol. This is the spot where immortal defenders the renowned Jaimal of Badnor and his clansman Kalla, who carried his wounded chief down to strike a last stroke at his enemy, met their death during Akbar's seize in AD 1568. The lower chhatra with four pillars is that of Kalla and the other one with six pillars is that of Jaimal. Futta's memorial is erected over chabutra at the foot of upper-part of the hill on the inner side of the Ram Pol. This is the spot where the famous Futta of Aret fell in during the seize of the Chittaur in AD 1568 by Akbar. Saindas memorial is raised on a platform in front of the Suraj Pol i.e. east gateway of the fort. This marks the spot where Chundawat Saindas of Salumbar sacrificed his life for the cause of Chittaur when Akbar seized the fort in AD 1568. Raghodeo memorial stands on the south-east of Ban Mata Temple. The chhatra is supported on four pillars built in the memory of semi-defied Raghodeo, the younger brother of Chunda. He was killed at the instance of Rao Ranmal of Mandor who became the ruler of Mewar when Maharana Kumbha was a minor.

**Pols/Gateways** : To enter the main fort, one has to cross seven gates. The first gate is known as Padal Pol in front of which on the left side is a square chabutara with an erected stone on it, marking the spot where Bagh Singh was killed. From here, the ascent begins upto the upper gates Bhairava Pol and Hanuman Pol to the first bend and then turning south one passes through the Ganesa Pol and Jorla Pol just before the second bend. The road turns again to the north leaving the bend through Lakshaman Pol to the uppermost gate i.e. Ram Pol. Ram Pol, the main entrance to the fort was built in AD 1459 and has an octagonal tower on each side decorated with images of Ganesa and Bhairava in the middle and rows of the carved elephants, horses and men at the plinth. It is crowned by quasi-arch of horizontal courses. The upper courses of either side projecting inwards and overlapping each other till they meet. This type of construction was applied in all the gateways except Jorla Pol. The principal entrance to the Kumbha Palace is known as Bari Pol and other one is Tripolia gate with two towers, one each side and two square rooms within it. Besides, there is another gate on the eastern side of the fort, known as Suraj Pol from where the Mughal army entered into the fort. In front of this is the memorial of Chundawat Saindas, who sacrificed his life for the cause of Chittaurgarh in AD 1568 when Akbar seized the fort.