

PALITANAA

THE JAIN PILGRIMAGE CENTER

THE MARVEL OF JAINISM AND THE RELIGIOUS ART

The **Palitana temples** of Jainism are located on Mount Shatrunjaya, by the city of Palitana, in Bhavnagar district, Gujarat, India. The city of the same name, known previously as Padliptapur, has been nicknamed "City of Temples". Along with Sammet Shikhar, earlier in Bihar state, now of Jharkhand, the two sites are considered the holiest of all pilgrimage places by the Jain community. As the temple-city was built to be an abode for the divine, no one is allowed to stay overnight, including the priests. Every Jain believes that a visit to this group of temples is essential once in a life time to achieve nirvana or salvation.^[3]

The Jain's sacred site of Shatrunjay contains hundreds of Palitana temples. There are approximately 863 marble-carved temples on the hills.

It is said that 23 *Tirthankara* (a human being who helps in achieving liberation and enlightenment), except Neminath (a liberated soul which has destroyed all of its karma), sanctified the hill temples by their visits. The main temple is dedicated to the Rishabha, the first *Tirthankara*; it is the holiest shrine for the Svetambara Murtipujaka Jain sect who are worshipers of images of gods. The Digambara sect of Jainism has only one temple here.

The summit is situated at an elevation of 7,288 feet (2,221 m). Reaching it involves climbing over 3,750 stone steps. However, during the monsoon season the temples are closed for devotees.

It takes approximately two hours to make the 3.5 kilometres (2.2 mi) climb.

There are multiple routes. The shortest one goes around the outer walls of the temples on the hilltop and passes Angar Pir, the shrine of a Muslim saint who is reported to have protected the temples on during Muslim invasions.

A second route goes around the foot of the mountain. A large number of pilgrims take part in a third route in the month of Phalguna (February/March), which passes five sacred temple sites over a distance of 45 kilometres . Elderly pilgrims who cannot climb the stairs are carried on a *doli* (swing chair) carried by porters and charged based on the pilgrim's weight

From the top of Shatrunjaya are views of the Gulf of Cambay and the rugged, drought-affected landscape. The narrow streets or lanes in the temple complex are similar to the ones found in the medieval cities of Europe. The high walls surrounding the temples give the appearance of a fort. Important features include the Ashok tree, the Chaitra tree, Jaytaleti, four-mouthed idol of Bhagawan

Mahavir, Hingraj Ambikadevi (known as Hinglaj Mata, the presiding deity of the hill), Kumarpal, Vimalshah and Samprati.

Palitana was a princely state of India till it merged with India after independence in August 1947. It was the capital of the Kingdom of Rajpipla and Gohil Rajput clan.

As a princely state, founded in 1194 (one of the major states in Saurashtra, where there were many smaller states, Palitana covered 777 km² and had 58,000 inhabitants (in 1921) in 91 villages, generating a 744,416 Rs revenue.

In 1656, Shah Jahan's son Murad Baksh (the then Governor of Gujarat) granted the village of Palitana to the prominent Jain merchant Shantidas Jhaveri. The management of the temples was assigned to the Anandji Kalyanji Trust in 1730.

Rishabha sanctified the hill where he delivered his first sermon. It was his grandson Pundarik, grandson of Rishabha who received salvation at Shatrunjay, hence the hill was originally known as "Pundarikgiri". Bharata, the father of Pundarik and half-brother of Bahubali, also came to Shatrunjaya many times; he is also credited with building a temple here.

The Palitana temples were built over a period of 900 years starting in the 11th century. They were destroyed by Turkish Muslims invaders in 1311 AD, when the saint Jinaprabhasuri, who was then 50 years old, presided over the temples. Two years later, the rebuilding began. While some temple building activity took place under Samara Shah, it was only two centuries later that it picked up momentum, when in 1593, Hiravijayasuri (Chief of Tapa Gaccha) organized a major pilgrimage to this location to attend the consecration ceremony of the temple built for Rishabha by Tej Pal Soni, a merchant. Following this, there was proliferation of temples here.

The most important temples are those of Adinath, Kumarpal, Sampratiraja, Vimal Shah, Sahasrakuta, Ashtapada and Chaumukh. Some of them are named after the wealthy patrons who paid for the construction. Most of them which are now present date to the 16th century. In 1656, Shah Jahan's son Murad Baksh (the then Governor of Gujarat) granted Palitana villages to the prominent Jain merchant Shantidas Jhaveri, a Svetambara Jain, in 1656, and subsequently when all taxes were also exempted that the temple town further prospered. It was brought under the control of the Anandji Kalyanji Trust in 1730 to manage not only Palitana temples but also many other temples of Svetambara Jains, since the Mughal period.

It is said that sculptors' skills and capacity to carve with abrasive chords (not tools) the intricate designs was paid on the basis of the marble dust that they had collected every evening after their hard labour. Kumarpal Solanki, a great Jain patron, probably built the earliest temples.

History also make a mention that Lunia Seth Tilokchand, a merchant from Ajmer led a very large contingent of pilgrims to the Shatrunjaya temples when he heard that there were some disturbances at the Angarshah Pir on the hills. But he continued his pilgrimage and pleased the Pir by his offerings. This tradition is followed to this day by his descendents by offering an expensive cloth to cover the dome of the shrine.

Renovations

There have been frequent renovations and many of them are dated to the 16th century. New temples continue to be built here. Renovations occurred at least 16 times during the [avasarpinikala](#) (the descending half of the wheel of time):

Renovation	Renovator	Times	Notes
1st	Chakravarti Bharat	Adinath	son of Adinath
2nd	King Dandavirya		–
3rd	Ishaneshvar		Indra of Upper World
4th	Mahendra	interim period between Adinath and Ajitnath	Indra of fourth upper world (dev-lok)
5th	Brahmendra		Indra of fifth upper world (dev-lok)
6th	Chamarendra		Indra of Bhavanapatis
7th	Sagar Chakravarti	Ajitnath	second Chakravarti
8th	Vyantarendra	Abhinandannath	–
9th	King Chandrayasha	Chandraprabha	–
10th	Chakrayuddha	Shantinath	son of Shantinath
11th	Ram and Lakshaman	Munisuvrata	Ramayana Kings
12th	5 Pandava	Neminatha	Mahabharta Kings
13th	Javed Shah of Mahuva	Vikram Samvat 108	He spent a million gold coins.
14th	advisor Bahud	Vikram Samvat 1213	Times of Kumarpal
15th	Samara Shah Oswal	Vikram Samvat 1371	spent 2770000
16th	Karama Shah of Chitod	Vikram Samvat 1587	on 6th day of the dark half of Vaisakh

It is believed that Vimalvahan shall do the 17th renovation during the period of Duppasahsuri in future



[1]

***PALITANA IS THE LARGEST AND THE GREATEST
JAIN SACRED PILGRIMAGE CENTER IN THE WORLD.***



[2]

THE PALITANA HILLS

IS PLACE FROM WHERE MILLIONS OF SOULS

ARE BELIEVED

TO HAVE ACHIEVED NIRAVANA OR ULTIMATE AND EVERLASTING LIBERATION

WITH

INFINITE KNOWLEDGE, INFINTE PERCEPTION, INFINTE ENERGY

AND

INFINITE SPIRITUAL HAPPINESS.



[3]
***PALITANA IS A CITY IN BHAVANGAR DISTRICT OF STATE OF GUJARAT,
IN INDIA. IT IS SITUATED ABOUT FIFTY KILOMETERS SOUTHWEST
OF BHAVNAGAR CITY. .***



[4]

***THE TEMPLE COMPLEX OF PALITANA IS THE WORLD'S LARGEST AND CONSIDERED
THE MOST SACRED PILGRIMAGE PLACE BY THE JAINS ALL OVER THE WORLD.***

***THERE ARE SOME 3000 EXQUISITE TEMPLES WITH MARVELLOUS ART
ON SHATRUNJAY HILLS.***

***THE FIRST TIRTHANKAR LORD ADINATHA
OR RISHABHDEVA
HAS THE MOST PRONOUNCED PLACEMENT.***



[5]

***ON TOP OF THE SHATRUNJAYA HILL
IS A CLUSTER OF JAIN TEMPLES
BUILT OVER
SOME 900 YEARS BY GENERATIONS OF JAINS
STARTING FROM 11TH CENTURY***



[6]

FROM THE FOOT OF THE HILL TO THE TOP

THERE ARE MORE THAN

3,800 STONE STEPS

CARVED OUT FROM ROCKS

TO FACILITATE CLIMBING IN 13TH CENTURY



[7]

THE TEMPLES ARE EXQUISITELY CARVED IN MARBLE

RESEMBLING IVORY IN LOOK.

THE LEADING TEMPLE IS OF LORD ADISHWAR.



[8]

***THIS TEMPLE HAS A FABULOUS COLLECTION OF EXPENSIVE JEWELS
DEDICATED BY RICH JAIN PATRONS.***



[9]

THE TEMPLES DATE FROM 11th TO THE 20th CENTURY



[10]

***THE DAY OF THE FAGUN SUD 13th FALLING SOMEWHERE IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH
IS THE MOST VISITED AND CROWDED DAY***



[11]

***A JAIN ASPIRES
TO CLIMB TO THE TOP OF MOUNTAIN
ONCE IN HIS LIFE TIME***



[12]

MOTI SHAH TOONK(TEMPLE)

AT THE TOP OF THE SIDDHACHA HILLS



[13]

THE CLIMB MUST BEGIN IN EARLY MORNING

AND RETURN DESCENT MUST BE COMPLETED IN EVENING.

NO STAYING OVERNIGHT



[14]

SOME FACTS ABOUT PALITANA.

SHETRUNJAY TEMPLES; STEPS TO CLIMB: 3364

HEIGHT: 2000 FEET. WALKING: 7.5 MILES.

PRATIMA OR IDOLS ARE 27007 IN JINMANDIR

OR TEMPLES TOTALLING 3507



[15]

***THERE ARE MORE THAN 27000 IDOLS OF JAIN GODS
ON THIS MOUNTAIN ALONE***



[16]

***OVERNIGHT STAY IS FORBIDDEN FOR ALL HUMANS
AS IT IS PEACEFUL RESTING PLACE FOR GODS***



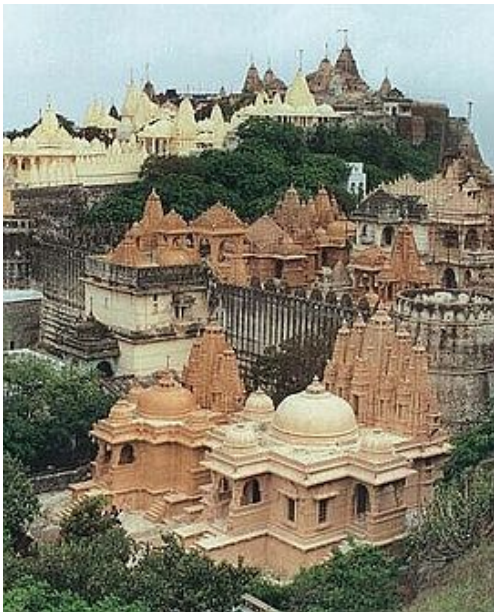
[17]

THERE ARE TWO SUMMITS

WITH 900 TEMPLES

WITH EXTRAORDINARY

ART AND SCULPTURE







ADINATH
AT
PALITAANAA

