

DATTA MANDIR

1. Sir Marc Aurel Stein, a Hungarian-born British archaeologist is credited with mapping all the ancient sites in Kashmir during one of his many expeditions in the 1900s. Also considered by many to be a great Indologist, Aurel Stein was a Sanskrit scholar and translated the famous Rajatarangini written by the Kashmiri historian Kalhana.
2. That century-old map is the key to understanding the wealth of Hindu heritage and culture that Kashmir was once renowned for. One of the most famous monuments documented by many archaeologists, historians and architects is the Datta Mandir located at Boniyar near Uri in Baramulla district.
3. Datta Mandir is actually Detha Mandir Bandi according to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and is believed to have been built in the 10th century in the typical Kashmiri style of architecture. There is a very old photograph taken by a renowned botanist, Ralph. R. Stewart in 1913 which shows the ancient Datta Mandir under repair.
4. Legend has it that this temple was actually built by the Pandavas during their exile. The stones used to build this temple was carried by Bheema all the way from the nearby mountains. This temple is situated on the banks of Vitasta River (Jhelum River) and dedicated to Lord Vishnu.
5. There is an interesting 'Bheem ka matka' which is a huge clay pot in which Bheema used to fill water from the Vitasta River for Draupadi and his brothers every day. You can see the clay pot is at least 5 feet deep if not more. This is considered to be an extraordinary water source as the water level never reduces no matter how much water you take out. The water from this 'matka' is used for the daily rituals.
6. This magnificent temple was desecrated in 1947. A lot of the ancient idols were damaged and religiously significant motifs and ornaments were stolen. The Indian Army installed a beautiful marble Shiva in 1992.
7. Unfortunately, there is not much information available about this sacred temple. Datta Mandir like most of the Hindu temples in Kashmir has incurred immense damage but its glorious past cannot be forgotten.



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