

= Jokhang =

The Jokhang ( Tibetan : ཇོ་ཁང་ , Chinese : 布达拉宫 ) , also known as the Qoikang Monastery , Jokang , Jokhang Temple , Jokhang Monastery and Zuglagkang ( Tibetan : ཇོ་ཁང་གི་ལྷ་ཁང་ , Wylie : gtsug @-@ lag @-@ khang , ZYPY : Zuglagkang or Tsuklakang ) , is a Buddhist temple in Barkhor Square in Lhasa , the capital city of Tibet . Tibetans , in general , consider this temple as the most sacred and important temple in Tibet . The temple is currently maintained by the Gelug school , but they accept worshipers from all sects of Buddhism . The temple 's architectural style is a mixture of Indian vihara design , Tibetan and Nepalese design .

The Jokhang was founded during the reign of King Songtsen Gampo . According to tradition , the temple was built for the king 's two brides : Princess Wencheng of the Chinese Tang dynasty and Princess Bhrikuti of Nepal . Both are said to have brought important Buddhist statues and images from China and Nepal to Tibet , which were housed here , as part of their dowries . The oldest part of the temple was built in 652 . In the next 900 years the temple was enlarged several times with the last renovation done in 1610 by the Fifth Dalai Lama . Following the death of Gampo , the image in Ramcho Lake temple was moved to the Jokhang temple for security reasons . When King Tresang Detsan ruled from 755 to 797 , the Buddha image of the Jokhang temple was hidden , as the king 's minister was hostile to the spread of Buddhism in Tibet . During the late ninth and early tenth centuries , the Jokhang and Ramoche temples were said to have been used as stables . In 1049 Atisha , a renowned teacher of Buddhism from Bengal taught in Jokhang .

Around the 14th century , the temple was associated with the Vajrasana in India . In the 18th century the Qianlong Emperor of the Qing dynasty , following the Gorkha @-@ Tibetan war in 1792 , did not allow the Nepalese to visit this temple and it became an exclusive place of worship for the Tibetans . During the Chinese development of Lhasa , the Barkhor Square in front of the temple was encroached . During the Cultural Revolution , Red Guards attacked the Jokhang temple in 1966 and for a decade there was no worship . Renovation of the Jokhang took place from 1972 to 1980 . In 2000 , the Jokhang became a UNESCO World Heritage Site as an extension of the Potala Palace ( a World Heritage Site since 1994 ) . Many Nepalese artists have worked on the temple 's design and construction .

= = Location = =

The temple , considered the " spiritual heart of the city " and the most sacred in Tibet , is at the center of an ancient network of Buddhist temples in Lhasa . It is the focal point of commercial activity in the city , with a maze of streets radiating from it . The Jokhang is 1 @,@ 000 metres ( 3 @,@ 300 ft ) east of the Potala Palace . Barkhor , the market square in central Lhasa , has a walkway for pilgrims to walk around the temple ( which takes about 20 minutes ) . Barkhor Square is marked by four stone sankang ( incense burners ) , two of which are in front of the temple and two in the rear .

= = Etymology = =

Rasa Thrulnag Tsuklakang ( " House of Mysteries " or " House of Religious Science " ) was the Jokhang 's ancient name . When King Songtsen built the temple his capital city was known as Rasa ( " Goats " ) , since goats were used to move earth during its construction . After the king 's death , Rasa became known as Lhasa ( Place of the Gods ) ; the temple was called Jokhang ? " Temple of the Lord " ? derived from Jowo Shakyamuni Buddha , its primary image . The Jokhnag 's Chinese name is Dazhao ; it is also known as Zuglagkang , Qoikang Monastery and Tsuglhakhange .

= = History = =

Tibetans viewed their country as a living entity controlled by srin ma ( pronounced " sinma " ) , a wild demoness who opposed the propagation of Buddhism in the country . To thwart her evil intentions , King Songtsen Gampo ( the first king of a unified Tibet ) developed a plan to build twelve

temples across the country . The temples were built in three stages . In the first stage central Tibet was covered with four temples , known as the " four horns " ( ru bzhi ) . Four more temples , ( mtha 'dul ) , were built in the outer areas in the second stage ; the last four , the yang 'dul , were built on the country 's frontiers . The Jokhang temple was finally built in the heart of the srin ma , ensuring her subjugation .

To forge ties with neighboring Nepal , Songtsen Gampo sent envoys to King Amsuvarman seeking his daughter 's hand in marriage and the king accepted . His daughter , Bhrikuti , came to Tibet as the king 's Nepalese wife ( tritsun ; belsa in Tibetan ) . The image of Akshobhya Buddha ( or Mikyoba ) , which she had brought as part of her dowry , was deified in a temple in the middle of a lake known as Ramoche .

Gampo , wishing to obtain a second wife from China , sent his ambassador to Emperor Taizong ( 627 ? 650 ) of the Tang dynasty for one of his daughters . Taizong rejected the king 's proposal , considering Tibetans " barbarians " , and announced the marriage of one of his daughters to the king of Duyu , a Hun . This infuriated Gampo , who mounted attacks on tribal areas affiliated with the Tang dynasty and then attacked the Tang city of Songzhou . Telling the emperor that he would escalate his aggression unless the emperor agreed to his proposal , Gampo sent a conciliatory gift of a gold @-@ studded " suit of armour " with another request for marriage . Taizong conceded , giving Princess Wencheng to the Tibetan king . When Wencheng went to Tibet in 640 as the Chinese wife of the king ( known as Gyasa in Tibet ) , she brought an image of Sakyamuni Buddha as a young prince . The image was deified in a temple originally named Trulnang , which became the Jokhang . The temple became the holiest shrine in Tibet and the image , known as Jowo Rinpoche , has become the country 's most @-@ revered idol .

The oldest part of the temple was built in 652 by Songtsen Gampo . To find a location for the temple , the king reportedly tossed his hat ( a ring in another version ) ahead of him with a promise to build a temple where the hat landed . It landed in a lake , where a white stupa ( memorial monument ) suddenly emerged over which the temple was built . In another version of the legend , Queen Bhrikuti founded the temple to install the statue she had brought and Queen Wencheng selected the site according to Chinese geomancy and feng shui . The lake was filled , leaving a small pond now visible as a well fed by the ancient lake , and a temple was built on the filled area . Over the next nine centuries , the temple was enlarged ; its last renovation was carried out in 1610 by the Fifth Dalai Lama .

The temple 's design and construction are attributed to Nepalese craftsmen . After Songtsen Gampo 's death , Queen Wencheng reportedly moved the statue of Jowo from the Ramoche temple to the Jokhang temple to secure it from Chinese attack . The part of the temple known as the Chapel was the hiding place of the Jowo Sakyamuni .

During the reign of King Tresang Detsan from 755 to 797 , Buddhists were persecuted because the king 's minister , Marshang Zongbagyi ( a devotee of Bon ) , was hostile to Buddhism . During this time the image of Akshobya Buddha in the Jokhang temple was hidden underground , reportedly 200 people failed to locate it . The images in the Jokhang and Ramoche temples were moved to Jizong in Ngari , and the monks were persecuted and driven from Jokhang . During the anti @-@ Buddhist activity of the late ninth and early tenth centuries , the Jokhang and Ramoche temples were said to be used as stables . In 1049 Atisha , a renowned teacher of Buddhism from Bengal who taught in Jokhang and died in 1054 , found the " Royal Testament of the Pillar " ( Bka ' chems ka khol ma ) in a pillar at Jokhang ; the document was said to be the testament of Songtsen Gampo .

Beginning in about the 14th century , the temple was associated with the Vajrasana in India . It is said that the image of Buddha deified in the Jokhang is the 12 @-@ year @-@ old Buddha earlier located in the Bodh Gaya Temple in India , indicating " historical and ritual " links between India and Tibet . Tibetans call Jokhang the " Vajrasana of Tibet " ( Bod yul gyi rDo rje gdani ) , the " second Vajrasana " ( rDo rje gdan pal } and " Vajrasana , the navel of the land of snow " ( Gangs can sa yi lte ba rDo rje gdani ) .

After the occupation of Nepal by the Gorkhas in 1769 , during the Gorkha @-@ Tibetan war in 1792 the Qianlong Emperor of the Qing dynasty drove the Gorkhas from Tibet and the Tibetans were

isolated from their neighbors . The period , lasting for more than a century , has been called " the Dark Age of Tibet " . Pilgrimages outside the country were forbidden for Tibetans , and the Qianlong Emperor suggested that it would be equally effective to worship the Jowo Buddha at the Jokhang .

In Chinese development of Lhasa , Barkhor Square was encroached when the walkway around the temple was destroyed . An inner walkway was converted into a plaza , leaving only a short walkway as a pilgrimage route . In the square , religious objects related to the pilgrimage are sold .

During the Cultural Revolution , Red Guards attacked the Jokhang in 1966 and for a decade there was no worship in Tibetan monasteries . Renovation of the Jokhang began in 1972 , and was mostly complete by 1980 . After this and the end of persecution , the temple was re-consecrated . It is now visited by a large number of Tibetans , who come to worship Jowo in the temple 's inner sanctum . During the Revolution , the temple was spared destruction and was reportedly boarded up until 1979 . At that time , portions of the Jokhang reportedly housed pigs , a slaughterhouse and Chinese army barracks . Soldiers burned historic Tibetan scriptures . For a time , it was a hotel .

Two flagstone doring ( inscribed pillars ) outside the temple , flanking its north and south entrances , are worshiped by Tibetans . The first monument , a March 1794 edict known as the " Forever Following Tablet " in Chinese , records advice on hygiene to prevent smallpox ; some has been chiseled out by Tibetans who believed that the stone itself had curative powers . The second , far older , pillar is 5 @. @ 5 metres ( 18 ft ) high with a crown in the shape of a palace and an inscription dated 821 or 822 . The tablet has a number of names ; " Number One Tablet in Asia " , " Lhasa Alliance Tablet " , " Changing Alliance Tablet " , " Uncle and Nephew Alliance Tablet " and the " Tang Dynasty @-@ Tubo Peace Alliance Tablet " . ) Its inscription , in Tibetan and Chinese , is a treaty between the Tibetan king Ralpachen and the Chinese emperor delineating the boundary between their countries . Both inscriptions were enclosed by brick walls when Barkhor Square was developed in 1985 . The Sino @-@ Tibetan treaty reads , " Tibet and China shall abide by the frontiers of which they are now in occupation . All to the east is the country of Great China ; and all to the west is , without question , the country of Great Tibet . Henceforth on neither side shall there be waging of war nor seizing of territory . If any person incurs suspicion he shall be arrested ; his business shall be inquired into and he shall be escorted back " .

According to the Dalai Lama , among the many images in the temple was an image of Chenrizi , made of clay in the temple , within which the small wooden statue of the Buddha brought from Nepal was hidden . The image was in the temple for 1300 years , and when Songtsen Gampo died his soul was believed to have entered the small wooden statue . During the Cultural Revolution , the clay image was smashed and the smaller Buddha was given by a Tibetan to the Dalai Lama .

In 2000 , the Jokhang became a UNESCO World Heritage Site as an extension of the Potala Palace ( a World Heritage Site since 1994 ) to facilitate conservation efforts . The temple is listed in the first group of State Cultural Protection Relic Units , and has been categorized as a 4A @-@ level tourist site .

= = Architecture = =

The Jokhang temple covers an area of 2 @. @ 51 hectares ( 6 @. @ 2 acres ) . When it was built during the seventh century , it had eight rooms on two floors to house scriptures and sculptures of the Buddha . The temple had brick @-@ lined floors , columns and door frames and carvings made of wood . During the Tubo period , there was conflict between followers of Buddhism and the indigenous Bon religion . Changes in dynastic rule affected the Jokhang Monastery ; after 1409 , during the Ming dynasty , many improvements were made to the temple . The second and third floors of the Buddha Hall and the annex buildings were built during the 11th century . The main hall is the four @-@ story Buddha Hall .

The temple has an east @-@ west orientation , facing Nepal to the west in honour of Princess Bhrikuti . Additionally , the monastery 's main gate faces west . The Jokhang is aligned along an axis , beginning with an arch gate and followed by the Buddha Hall , an enclosed passage , a cloister , atriums and a hostel for the lamas ( monks ) . Inside the entrance are four " Guardian Kings " ( Chokyong ) , two on each side . The main shrine is on the ground floor . On the first floor are murals

, residences for the monks and a private room for the Dalai Lama , and there are residences for the monks and chapels on all four sides of the shrine . The temple is made of wood and stone . Its architecture features the Tibetan Buddhist style , with influences from China , Indian vihara design and Nepal . The roof is covered with gilded bronze tiles , figurines and decorated pavilions .

The central Buddha Hall is tall , with a large , paved courtyard . A porch leads to the open courtyard , which is two concentric circles with two temples : one in the outer circle and another in the inner circle . The outer circle has a circular path , with a number of large prayer wheels ( nangkor ) ; this path leads to the main shrine , which is surrounded by chapels . Only one of the temple murals remains , depicting the arrival of Queen Wencheng and an image of the Buddha . The image , brought by the king 's Nepalese wife and initially kept at Ramoche , was moved to Jokhang and kept in the rear center of the inner temple . This Buddha has remained on a platform since the eighth century ; on a number of occasions , it was moved for safekeeping . The image , amidst those of the king and his two consorts , has been gilded several times . In the main hall on the ground floor is a gilded bronze statue of Jowo Sakyamuni , 1 @.@ 5 metres ( 4 ft 11 in ) tall , representing the Buddha at age twelve . The image has a bejeweled crown , cover around its shoulder , a diamond on its forehead and wears a pearl @-@ studded garment . The Buddha is seated in a lotus position on a three @-@ tiered lotus throne , with his left hand on his lap and his right hand touching the earth . A number of chapels surround the Jowo Sakayamuni , dedicated to gods and bodhisattvas . The most important bodhisattva here is the Avalokiteshwara , the patron saint of Tibet , with a thousand eyes and a thousand arms . Flanking the main hall are halls for Amitabha ( the Buddha of the past ) and Qamba ( the Buddha of the future ) . Incarnations of Sakyamuni are enshrined on either side of a central axis , and the Buddha 's warrior guard is in the middle of the halls on the left side .

In addition to the main hall and its adjoining halls , on both sides of the Buddha Hall are dozens of 20 @-@ square @-@ metre ( 220 sq ft ) chapels . The Prince of Dharma chapel is on the third floor , including sculptures of Songtsen Gampo , Princess Wencheng , Princess Bhrikuti , Gar Tongtsan ( the Tabo minister ) and Thonmi Sambhota , the inventor of Tibetan script . The halls are surrounded by enclosed walkways .

Decorations of winged apsaras , human and animal figurines , flowers and grasses are carved on the superstructure . Images of sphinxes with a variety of expressions are carved below the roof .

The temple complex has more than 3 @,@ 000 images of the Buddha and other deities ( including an 85 @-@ foot ( 26 m ) image of the Buddha ) and historical figures , in addition to manuscripts and other objects . The temple walls are decorated with religious and historical murals .

On the rooftop and roof ridges are iconic statues of golden deer flanking a Dharma wheel , victory flags and monstrous fish . The temple interior is a dark labyrinth of chapels , illuminated by votive candles and filled with incense . Although portions of the temple has been rebuilt , original elements remain . The wooden beams and rafters have been shown by carbon dating to be original , and the Newari door frames , columns and finials dating to the seventh and eighth centuries were brought from the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal .

In addition to walking around the temple and spinning prayer wheels , pilgrims prostrate themselves before approaching the main deity ; some crawl a considerable distance to the main shrine . The prayer chanted during this worship is " Om mani padme hum " ( Hail to the jewel in the lotus ) . Pilgrims queue on both sides of the platform to place a ceremonial scarf ( katak ) around the Buddha 's neck or touch the image 's knee . A walled enclosure in front of the Jokhang , near the Tang Dynasty @-@ Tubo Peace Alliance Tablet , contains the stump of a willow known as the " Tang Dynstay Willow " or the " Princess Willow " . The willow was reportedly planted by Princess Wencheng .

= = Buddhist scriptures and sculptures = =

The Jokhang has a sizable , significant collection of cultural artifacts , including Tang @-@ dynasty bronze sculptures and finely @-@ sculpted figures in different shapes from the Ming dynasty . Among hundreds of thangkas , two notable paintings of Chakrasamvara and Yamanataka date to

the reign of the Yongle Emperor ; both are embroidered on silk and well @-@ preserved . The collection also has 54 boxes of Tripi?aka printed in red , 108 carved sandalwood boxes with sutras and a vase ( a gift from the Qianlong Emperor ) used to select the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama .