

## = Raghunath Temple =

Raghunath Temple consists of a complex of seven Hindu shrines , each with its own Shikhara . It is one of the largest temple complexes of north India . It is located in Jammu in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir . The temple was built during the period 1822 ? 1860 by order of Maharaja Ranjit Singh , while Jammu was under his administration by Maharaja Gulab Singh . The temple has many gods in its complex of shrines , but the presiding deity is Rama , an Avatar of Vishnu . The Mughal architectural influence is seen in all the spiral shaped towers which have gold plated spires , except the tower over the main shrine which is said to be in Sikh architectural style . The niches in the walls of the shrines are decorated with 300 well crafted images of deities . The paintings in the 15 panels of the main shrine are based on themes from Ramayana , Mahabharata , and Bhagavad Gita .

The temple was also in the news during 2002 when suicide bombers Fidayeen of the Lashkar @-@ e @-@ Toiba attacked it twice with grenades and indulged in indiscriminate firing which resulted in death of many devotees and also in injuries to many people .

## = = Location = =

The temple complex is located at Sui 18 kilometres ( 11 mi ) , west of Jammu city in Jammu and Kashmir . The city is well connected by road , rail and air services . The National Highway 1 A passes through Jammu and connects with all parts of the country . The National Highway 1B is entirely within the state . Jammu city has a railway station called Jammu Tawi , on the northern railway line , that is well connected with major cities of India . Express trains operate from this station to Delhi , Mumbai , Chennai , Kolkata and Amritsar . Jammu Airport operates flights to many cities in India such as Delhi , Leh and Srinagar .

## = = History = =

During the reign of the rulers of Jammu Shivaliks , after 1765 , there was a spurt in temple building activity in Jammu area , which continued during the early period of the 19th century . The rulers built spiral shaped temples with brick and crowned each tower with bright Kalashas in the shape of shikhara ( rising tower ) . One such temple complex was started in 1822 ( 1835 is also mentioned ) by Gulab Singh , the ruler of Jammu and was dedicated to his guru Baba Prem Das . Its construction was completed in 1860 by his son Maharaja Ranbir Singh . However , according to an inscription in Brahmic script ( Takri ) at the entrance of the temple , Gulab Singh and his brother Dhyani Singh are credited with building the temple in 1827 in honour of Mahant Jagannath .

## = = = Religious school = = =

During the reign of Ranbir Singh , the temple complex became the centre of Sanskrit teachings to a large number of Brahmin students . A translation centre was also established as part of the temple where books on philosophy and history in Arabic and Persian languages were translated by Muslim scholars into Sanskrit . Like wise , Pundits translated many scriptures into Hindi and Dogri languages . This initiative taken by Maharaja Ranbir Singh to bring amity between the Hindu and Muslim communities was praised by Sir Aurel Stein as in :

order to facilitate the exchange of ideas which the Maharaja in a spirit of true enlightenment desired to promote between the representatives of Hindu and Mohammedan scholars in his domain .

The temple also houses a library , which has rare Sanskrit works .

## = = Features = =

The Hindu temple complex , one of the largest in North India , which has seven shrines , is built over a raised platform of 5 feet ( 1 @.@ 5 m ) height in an octagonal shape . The front fascia is 40

feet ( 12 m ) in width while the main shrine is set 50 feet ( 15 m ) away from the entrance . Within the enclosed space of the yard there are residential buildings and open cattle yards on its eastern and northern directions . The front fascia of the temple has three entry doors . The main shrine which is 20 feet ( 6 @. @ 1 m ) x20 feet ( 6 @. @ 1 m ) in size , is surrounded by a circumambulatory passage ( pradakshina path ) of 10 feet ( 3 @. @ 0 m ) width . The entrance door , set on one side of this octagonal chamber of the shrine , faces east . The interior of the inner chamber is gold plated . The main walls of the outer chamber have 15 panels , each of 9 feet ( 2 @. @ 7 m ) height . These interior panels have a surfeit of paintings of the Jammu School of painting consisting of images from the Hindu epics Ramayana , Mahabharata , and Bhagavad Gita , represented by gods such as Ganesha , Krishna , Sheshashayi Vishnu ( reclining Vishnu ) and also a large painting depicting the Sita Swayamvara scene ( Sita choosing her husband from an elite gathering of princesses ) . Apart from the mythology related themes , some paintings relate to secular aspects , like Kabir , a saint , engaged in weaving and army personnel of Dogra and Sikh communities . The paintings also reveal the type of attire and the weaponry prevalent during the period of temple building . In the main shrine , the idol of Lord Rama , which is the family deity of the then king and the Dogra people , is deified in the garbhagriha ( sanctum sanctorum ) . The shrine has a dome instead of the normal shikara in a pyramidal shape , which is in the Sikh architectural style . All the seven shrines have gold plated spires . Gods and Goddesses enshrined in the seven shrines are all related to the epic Ramayana . In one of the shrines there is a Shiva linga , which is carved out of black stone and measures 7 @. @ 5 feet ( 2 @. @ 3 m ) . The shrines are also enshrined with a very large number of Saligramas ( fossil ammonite stones specially obtained from the Gandaki river , in Nepal ? a Vaishnava ( Hindu ) aniconic representation of Vishnu ) . The architectural features of the shrines are stated to be largely influenced by Mughal architecture .

A distinct feature noted in the entire temple complex is the stucco style embellishments built with brick masonry and finished with plaster . The motifs crafted are of floral ( lotuses ) and geometric designs , on the walls , in the niches and on arches . Apart from paintings on the walls , the niches in the interior parts of the shrines have 300 well crafted images of deities . The profusion of paintings and images on the internal and external faces of the temple was considered an auspicious feature , instead of leaving the wall surfaces blank . However , the images and murals on the outer walls of the temple have since been demolished .

= = Terrorist attacks = =

On 30 March 2002 , a terrorist outfit first attacked in the market area by lobbing grenades and firing and then entered the temple . The security forces surrounded them . However , ten persons , including four security forces personnel and two militants , were killed and many more were injured . The second attack took place at the temple on 24 November 2002 , when the Hindus were performing puja in the temple ; this attack was made by bombers of the Lashkar @-@ e @-@ Toiba and resulted in the deaths of 13 devotees and injuries to several more .