Pashupatinath UNESCO Tour

Spanning across an area of 1.58 acres of land, Pashupatinath is the largest temple complex in Nepal. A sacred landmark with over 518 temples and structures, this UNESCO site is adjacent to the Bagmati River.

According to many, the Bagmati River is the source of Nepalese culture and society. The banks of this river are where all devout Hindus are cremated to attain salvation—i.e., To break free from the cycle of rebirth.

The religious site of Pasupatinath was classified as a cultural heritage site by the UN in 1979. It is among the most prominent Shiva temples of the Asian Subcontinent.

Revealed in the verses of the Saiva Nayanars (6th – 9th BC), these are a group of 275 Shiva temples scattered across the entire continent. They are collectively known as the Thevara Sthalam/Paadal Petra Sthalam.

Overview

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Numerous scriptures and Vedas also refer to Shivaji by the name of Pashupatinath. However, according to the Shiva Purana, Shivaji’s real name is Pashupatinath.

Lord Shiva is known as “Pashupatinath” because when the Pandavas from the Mahabharata visit him to seek absolution from the sin of genocide, he manifests himself as an animal.

The Hindu god Shiva is represented as the “lord of the animals” by Pashupati. This is also the national deity of Nepal. A looming macabre atmosphere on this site is associated with the various rituals that take place here.

The smell of cremated bodies is distinctive, and a cloud of rising smoke accompanying this is ever present here. You will observe many ascetic Sadhus around here in their typical saffron attire with ash-smeared faces and lengthy locks of hair.

As a mark of respect, all leather items (especially accessories) are forbidden at the site and must be left outside the temple.

Devotees of various religions flock to this religious establishment, including Jainism, Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Ganapati, and Buddhism. A manifestation of Shiva, one of the Hindu Trinity, is Pashupatinath.

History

According to a well-known folktale, Shiva and Parvati manifested themselves as antelopes in the forest next to the east bank of the Bagmati River. He was eventually discovered by the gods, who took him by one of his horns and made him regain his heavenly form.

Over time, the shattered horn—which had formerly been worshiped as a linga—was buried and forgotten. A herdsman discovered the sacred lingam of Pashupatinath after discovering one of his cows drenching the ground with milk centuries later.



In the 12th century, a king named Shivadeva was credited for rebuilding the temple once more in wood.

Then, in the 13th century, during Nepal’s renowned artistic era, King Ananta Malla constructed the magnificent roof. Termites later caused damage to this wooden temple, which was completely reconstructed in the 17th century.

Structure

A Licchavi ruler named Prachanda Deva built this temple in the Nepalese pagoda style. The copper-and-gold-covered two-level roofs have two levels.

The temple is supports itself on a platform with a square base and a height of 23 m 7 cm from base to pinnacle. There are four main doors, and each with a covering of silver sheets. The

temple’s pinnacle is made of gold (Gajur).

There are two garbhagriha inside: the inner garbhagriha, also known as the sanctum sanctorum, contains the idol, while the outer sanctum is an open area that resembles a corridor.

The main idol is a stone Mukhalinga bound by a silver serpent and resting on a silver yoni foundation. It is one meter tall and has four faces, each depicting a different element of Shiva.

Cheif Idol

The five faces of Pashupatinath symbolize several manifestations of Shiva, including Sadyojata (also known as Barun), Vamadeva (also known as Uma Maheswara), Tatpurusha, Aghor, and Ishana, who is unknown even to the seers. These are the five fundamental components of Hinduism—earth, water, air, light, and ether—facing West, North, East, South, and Zenith, respectively.

Each face features two little projecting hands, one holding a kamandalu and the other a rudraksha mala. It is only feasible to pour milk and Ganga-Jal during the ceremony through the primary priests because, unlike other Shiva lingams in India and Nepal, this lingam is constantly covered with its golden vastram, except when an Abhisheka is being performed.

Four priests can only touch the idol. The Bhatta and the Rajbhandari, two sets of priests, perform Pashupatinath’s daily rites. While Bhandaris are assistants and temple keepers who are not authorized to perform puja rituals or touch the deity, Bhattas carry out the daily rituals and they are permitted to touch the lingam.



The primary entrance into the temple courtyard is on the western side; the other three gates are only accessible during festivals. Who is granted admission into the inner courtyard is decided by the Pashupatinath area development trust and the temple security (Armed Police Force Nepal). Only practicing Buddhists from Nepal and Tibet and Hindus from South Asia's diaspora are permitted inside the temple.

Sikhs and Jains are given an exception; if they have Indian ancestry, they are permitted entry to the temple complex. Others can view the main temple from the river's opposite bank and spend $10 (1,000 Nepali rupees) to visit the smaller temples on the complex's exterior grounds.

Major Temples in the Vicinity

Vatsaleshwari

Between Aryaghat and Bhasmeshwar, on the bank of the Bagmati, is a stunning Vatsaleshwari temple. The only object worshiped as Siddhikali is an instrument; there is no idol. In this mandapa, it is thought that Mother Parvati possesses a hidden power. The Nepal Mahatma mentions Vatsaleshwari as another name for Parvati. This temple's mandapa is where Bhairav is invoked during worship.

The most significant Jatra (street carnival) in the Pashupati region is the Vatsaleshwari Jatra, held annually from Chaitra Krishna Chaturdashi for four days.

Vishwarupa

Located in the heart of a forest on the east side of Mrigasthali, there is a massive, majestic Vishwarupa temple with a Rajputana-style dome (deer park). It was constructed under Jang Bahadur's rule. A massive, sloping statue of Lord Shiva is housed in the temple. A chaughara surrounds it, and in each of its four corners are two idols of Shiva Parvati, Laxminarayan, Sitaram, and Radhakrishna.

Ananthanarayan

There is a sizable standing figure of Anantnarayan made completely of terracotta nearby the Vetaleshwar temple. One of the most magnificent statues in the Pashupatinath area is the Mallaka statue.

Kirateshwar Mahadev

Another important temple in the Pashupatinath area is the Kirateshwar Temple, located on a hilltop above Gaurighat. It began in the Kirat era. According to a legend, the temple was renamed Kirateshwar since Lord Shankara used to reside here as Kirateshwar.

Guheshwori

On the southern bank of the Bagmati River is where you'll find this Guheshwari temple. The temple's name, Guheshwori, persisted, because it was built on the spot where the goddess Sati's Guhriya fell. This temple receives special worship beginning during Ghatasthapana. The glory of Guhriyeshwari is praised in the Sriswasthani Bratakatha, Himavat Khanda, and Nepal Mahatmya, among other texts.

Here, the goddess is represented by a silver-plated waterhole protected by a silver Kalash (auspicious water jar).

Virupaksha

Near the Pasupathi Aryaghat is a statue of “Birupakshya,” the revered deity of the Kirati people. It is also called “Kaliko Murti” in Nepal. It is also regarded as one of Nepal’s oldest statues. Additionally, thought to be Lord Shiva’s human form is Virupaksha. According to various reports, the statue is slowly rising above the ground. The end of the world is said to take place when this statue rises above the ground.

Gorakhnath Temple

The Nath Yogi Community continues to light the Gorakhnath Baba’s 1400-year-old holy fireplace (Dhuna) daily. It is situated in the lovely Plateau of Mrigasthali, the old home of Lord Shiva, who lived there as a deer during the Satya Yuga. If you’re lucky and visit at a holy time, you might even encounter Siddhas (enlightened beings here.

Festivals

The festivals of Shivaratri, Teej and Janai Purnima (also known as Rakshyabandhan) are the major occasions at this UNESCO site.

The holy month of Shravan (the 5th month of the Hindu Calendar) also invites a huge assemblage of religious followers to this place. In the Swayambhu Purana, a text chronicling the origin of the Kathmandu Valley, it is stated that when Lokeshwar (a.k.a. Shiva) manifested himself in the orchard, he was accompanied by several yogis and the gods of the three worlds, including Harihar, Hiranyagarbha, Ganesh, and others.



An annual Hindu event on the 9th of September, Maha Shivaratri, is held to honor the god Shiva. The term also alludes to the night when Shiva dances the Tandava, a cosmic dance. An auspicious day known for extensive fasting, Shiva meditation, self-study, social peace, and an all-night vigil at Shiva temples.

On Teej (a festival only commemorated by Hindu women) in mid-September, devotees flock to the temple in great numbers. Women pray for their husbands' health, fortune, and longevity while wearing red bridal sarees. The entire temple complex and the surroundings are engulfed by a sea of scarlet.

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Inclusions

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