



MARTAND SUN TEMPLE OF KASHMIR VALLEY THROUGH THE AGES

Shabir Ahmad Lone¹, Prince Raina², Mohammad Ishaq Lone³, E. Ravi⁴

¹Research Scholar of History, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar-608002, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu, India

²Research Scholar, Department of History Bhagwant University

³ Lecturer, Department of Education, Baramulla-193201, Jammu and Kashmir

⁴Associate Professor (Deputed), Dept. Of History, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar-608002, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu, India

Correspondence: loneshabir714@gmail.com

Abstract

A Hindu temple devoted to Surya, the Martand Sun Temple (also called Pandou Laidan) dates back to the eighth century. Its building was ordered by the third Karkota Dynasty emperor, Lalitaditya Muktapida. Unfortunately, Sikandar Shah Miri, the Muslim monarch, demolished it, and it is now in ruins. The temple, located in Jammu and Kashmir five miles from Anantnag, had a fusion of Chinese, Gandharan, and Gupta architectural styles. It is known as Kartanda (Sun Temple) and is a centrally protected monument. The author draws attention to the remnants of the Kashmir Valley's Martand Sun Temple.

Keywords: *Architecture, Temple, Kashmir, explore*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The Martand Sun Temple, also referred to as Pandou Laidan, is a significant Hindu temple dedicated to Surya, dating back to the 8th century. It was commissioned by Emperor Lalitaditya Muktapida of the Karkota Dynasty. Unfortunately, the temple suffered destruction under the rule of the Muslim king Sikandar Shah Miri, leaving it in its current ruined state. Situated approximately five miles from Anantnag in Jammu and Kashmir, the temple exemplified a unique blend of architectural influences, incorporating Chinese, Gandharan, and Gupta styles. Known historically as Kartanda (Sun Temple), it holds the status of a centrally protected monument. The author highlights the enduring remnants of the Martand Sun Temple, emphasizing its historical significance within the Kashmir Valley.

The temple's physical loss was not the only effect of the devastation. The incident had a profound effect on the Hindu community in the area, resulting in a time of increased discrimination and misery. The Martand Sun Temple, which is regarded as one of the most sacred pilgrimage places for Kashmiri Pandits, maintains its profound religious and cultural significance in spite of the sad incident. The temple's legacy continues to be a moving part in Kashmiri history, illustrating the intricate relationship between the political and religious forces in the area.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To explore the famed Martand Sun Temple in Anantnag District, Kashmir Valley.
2. To discuss the traces, history, and architecture of the Martand Sun Temple.
3. To discuss the legacy of Martand Sun Temple and its significance as a well-known historical landmark and tourist destination in Kashmir Valley.

3. METHODOLOGY:

The current study is descriptive, historical in character, and based on secondary sources. Secondary data were collected from journals, periodicals, magazines, newspapers, newsletters, research articles, books, the Srinagar Archives, the internet, and public and unpublished records from the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, J&K Tourism Development Corporation, and Directorate of Tourism (Jammu/Kashmir).

4. DISCUSSION:

Jonaraja, who was appointed by Sikandar's son, sought to re-establish the Brahminical elite within the royal domain. In contrast, later Muslim chroniclers often framed historical events through an idealized perspective aligned with orthodox Islamic values. Scholars such as Chitrlekha Zutshi and Richard G. Salomon argue that Sikandar's policies were primarily driven by *realpolitik*, focusing on consolidating state authority over Brahmins for political legitimacy and to gain access to the significant wealth controlled by Brahminical institutions, paralleling strategies utilized by earlier Hindu rulers. J. L. Bhan highlights evidence of a stone sculpture dedicated to Sikandar, which questions the perception of religious persecution and suggests more nuanced religious interactions. Slake acknowledges that religious motivations played a role but posits that the resistance depicted by Brahmin chroniclers was influenced by their aversion to the disintegration of the Varna system under Muslim rule and the rise of Islamic traditions.

4.1 Degradation and Architecture

In terms of deterioration, earthquakes exacerbated the damage of the Martand temple's already-ruined remains. According to archaeological discoveries, the temple, which is perched on a plateau with sweeping vistas of the Kashmir Valley, was an example of a fusion of Chinese, Gandharan, Gupta, and Kashmiri architectural styles.



Panorama of the ruins from inside the main enclosure

The temple includes a colonnaded courtyard with a central main shrine surrounded by 84 smaller shrines, measuring 220 feet by 142 feet and incorporating an earlier temple. It stands as Kashmir's largest peristyle, noted for its detailed design with proportionate chambers along the perimeter. Following traditional Hindu architecture, the main entrance is on the western side, enhancing the temple's grandeur and adorned to reflect its sacred purpose. The central shrine, believed to have had a pyramidal roof, showcases Kashmiri architectural features. The antechamber displays carvings of deities such as Vishnu, Ganga, Yamuna, and Surya. Constructed from large grey limestone blocks with lime mortar, a material more common in North India after the 13th century, the temple suggests possible Byzantine architectural influence under Lalitaditya.

4.2 Conservation

The Archaeological Survey of India has designated the Martand Sun Temple in Jammu and Kashmir as a site of national significance. Under the name Kartanda (Sun Temple), it is included in the list of centrally protected monuments.



Details sign-ASI

Source:www.google.com

4.3 In popular culture

In 1970, the Hindi film "Man Ki Aankhen," starring Dharmendra and Waheeda Rahman, used the Martand Temple as a backdrop for the Rafi-Lata song "Chala Bhi Aa Aaja Rasiya." Similarly, in the 1975 Hindi film "Aandhi," starring Sanjeev Kumar and Suchitra Sen, the Martand Temple was used as the backdrop for the Kishore-Lata song "Tere Bina Zindagi Se Koi Shikwa Nahiin." The temple served as the backdrop for the song "Bismil" in the 2014 Hindi film "Haider," which was based on Hamlet and took place against the backdrop of the struggle in Kashmir. Some Kashmiri Pandits said that the place was shown unfavourably, calling it a "den of evil," which offended their feelings and sparked controversy. As a result, demands were made to outlaw the movie.



Temple ruins as seen from the entrance to the main temple structure

5. CONCLUSION:

Kashmiri architecture is notable for its unique design, featuring square or oblong temples that are classified as either closed (vimana) or open (mandapa). These 'Suddha' structures are constructed entirely from a single material, extending from the base to the summit. The region, which has been an important Hindu center since ancient times, primarily features temples dedicated to Lord Shiva. One prominent example is the Martand Sun Temple, commissioned by Lalitaditya Muktapida in the 8th century and dedicated to Surya, the solar deity. In the early 15th century, Sikandar Shah Miri ordered its destruction. Situated near Anantnag, the temple's ruins are recognized as a site of national importance. Distinctive elements of Kashmiri architecture include pyramidal roofs, trefoiled doorways, and wide intercolumniations. The Martand Sun Temple exemplifies these features, showcasing the medieval Hindu architectural style characteristic of the region.

REFERENCES

1. Lone, S. A. (2022). Art and Architecture of Ancient Kashmir During Karkota Dynasty with Special Reference to Lalitaditya Muktapida (724-761 AD). *Journal of Psychology and Political Science (JPPS) ISSN 2799-1024*, 2(03), 12-22.
2. Carter, M. L. (1990). The Art and Architecture of Ancient Kashmir
3. Dar, A. A., & Pandey, S. K. Ancient Hindu Temple Architecture of South Kashmir from 7th Century AD to 13th century AD.
4. Malik, A. B. (2021). A Study of Temple Architecture Development in Central and South Kashmir. *Ilkogretim Online*, 20(6), 4911-4915.
5. Dar, A. A. UNIQUE FEATURES OF ANCIENT HINDU TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE OF KASHMIR.
6. ud Din, A. M., & Kapote, S. An Assessment of Architectural Features of Sugandesha Temple, Kashmir.
7. Lone, S. A. (2022). LEGACY OF UTPALA DYANSTY IN KASHMIR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AVANTIVERMAN FROM (855-883 AD) A HISTORICAL STUDY. *International Journal of Educational Review, Law and Social Sciences (IJERLAS)*, 2(3), 483-488.
8. Lone, S. A., & Ravi, E. (2023). TOURISM INDUSTRY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR—CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES. *International Journal of Economic, Business, Accounting, Agriculture Management and Sharia Administration (IJEBA)*, 3(5), 1434-1437.
9. University of Chicago. (1957). *Encyclopaedia Britannica, a New Survey of Universal Knowledge* (Vol. 24). Encyclopaedia Britannica.

10. Kak, R. C. (1933). Ancient monuments of Kashmir. (No Title).
11. "Martand Temple in Kashmir: Its grandeur survives, and so do its controversies". *The Indian Express*. 4 September 2022. Retrieved 4 September 2022.
12. "Archaeological Survey of India protected monuments". *Heritage of kashmir.org*. Retrieved 11 August 2012.
13. "Protected monuments in Jammu & Kashmir". *asi.nic.in*, Archaeological Survey of India. Archived from the original on 7 May 2012. Retrieved 29 October 2012.
14. "Chala Bhi Aa Aaja Rasiya | Lata Mangeshkar, Mohammed Rafi | Man Ki Aankhen 1970 Songs | Dharmendra". Retrieved 4 February 2020 – via www.youtube.com.
15. "Tere Bina Zindagi Se Koi Shikwa To Nahin | Lata Mangeshkar, Kishore Kumar | Aandhi 1975 Songs". Retrieved 4 February 2020 – via www.youtube.com.
16. "Kashmiri Pandits seek ban on film Haider for misrepresenting ancient temple". *The Indian Express*. 7 October 2014. Retrieved 4 April 2022
17. Chrungoo, A. K., & Jalali, H. L. (2010). PANUN KASHMIR.
18. Kalsotra, B., Kumar, T., & Meenia, N. (2021). Unexplored Hindu's Religious Pilgrimage sites for tourism in Kashmir valley (J&K). *Revista Review Index Journal of Multidisciplinary*, 1(2), 19-26.
19. Warikoo, K. (1999). ECO-CULTURAL HERITAGE OF KASHMIR. *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies*, 3(2), 39.
20. Raina, A. N. (2002). Geography of Jammu & Kashmir State. *Radha Krishan Anand & Co., Pacca Danga, Jammu*, 9.
21. DAR, A. A. (2018). *ANCIENT HINDU TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE OF SOUTH KASHMIR FROM 3rd CENTUARY AD TO 10thCENTUARYAD*. Lulu. com.
22. Bakshi, S. R. (1997). *Kashmir: Valley and Its Culture* (Vol. 2). Sarup & Sons.
23. Sawhney, C. (2015). Displacement and Cultural Change: The Case of the Kashmiri Hindus. *The Eastern Anthropologist*, 68(1), 85-101.
24. Bakshi, S. R. (1997). *Kashmir Through Ages (5 Vol)*. Sarup & Sons.
25. Keenan, B. (2013). *Travels in Kashmir*. Hachette UK.
26. Sawhney, C. (2015). Displacement and Cultural Change: The Case of the Kashmiri Hindus. *The Eastern Anthropologist*, 68(1), 85-101.
27. Bhat, K. A. (2017). Cultural Conditions of Kashmir During 20th Century. *International Journal of Advances in Social Sciences*, 5(1), 5-10.
28. Bamzai, P. N. K. (1962). A history of Kashmir: political, social, cultural, from the earliest times to the present day. Metropolitan Book Company.
29. Dogra, R. C. (1986). *Jammu and Kashmir: A Select and Annotated Bibliography of Manuscripts, Books, and Articles Together with a Survey of Its History, Languages, and Literature from Rajatarangini to Modern Times*. Ajanta Publications.
30. Kak, S. (2021). The wonder that was Kashmir. preprint, Baton... Rouge Louisiana University.
31. Ray, S.C. (1970). *Early History and Culture of Kashmir*. Munshiram Manoharlal Wilson,
32. H. H. (2000). *The Hindu History of Kashmir*. Gulshan Publishers.
33. Bamzai, P. N. K. (1994). *Culture and political history of Kashmir* (Vol. 2). MD Publications Pvt. Ltd..
34. Bakshi, S. R. (1997). *Kashmir: Valley and Its Culture* (Vol. 2). Sarup & Sons.
35. Youngusband, F. E. (1996). *Kashmir*. Asian Educational Services.
36. Lone, S. A., & Kalaiselvi, A. (2023). Cultural Transmission Through Tourism in the Valley of Kashmir.
37. Lone, S. A. (2024). HISTORICAL LEGACY OF TOURISM IN KASHMIR VALLEY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DOGRA PERIOD. *Journal of International Islamic Law, Human Right and Public Policy*, 2(2), 453-456.