

Geographical Places in Jaisalmer

Sandeep Kumar

Asstt. Professor of Geography, Bhartiya Degree College, Mahendergarh

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ABSTRACT

There are five beautifully carved Havelis (Houses) near Mahaveer bhawan, built by Patwa brothers in 1800-1860 A.D. Patwa who constructed (Treasure of architecture) havelis were a class who used to deal in zari and badla (silver and golden threads) ornaments as the Patwa title suggest. In this family Guman Chand Patwa Jain was an intelligent businessmen. He had five sons, namely Bhadurmal, was attached to the Kota state and likewise Sawai Ram, the second son to Jhalrapatan state, the Magni Ram to Ratlam and fourth son Jorawar Mal to Udaipur and fifth son Pratap chand to Jaisalmer fort. Patwas were businessmen, bankers opium exporters and revenue contractors. He had business concerns at more than 300 places in India, Afghanistan and china. In the 19th century Jaisalmer city has been a centre for traders indulging in caravantrade with the neighboring states through or via Thar Desert. Each of the five, Havelis have been well decorated with splendid carvings Jharokha has, Ghokhras, Baris, Tibaris (Sun holes) and Kanwal (oriel window).

The house of Seth Patwa has such beautifully carved fronts that it is at first sight difficult to realize that works is on stone. Inside of the Havelis are some beautiful wall paintings, golden coloured roots, magnificently carved rooms, balconies, lamp stands niches, water stores, fountains at each corner, under ground store and wooden doors are very attractive. The roofs are made of paintinga with golden colour polish and art on glass is a sight to be seen.

From the top of the Havelis we can see golden view of the city and fort, it looks very fine during sun-rise time and full moon night. At such a moment its beauty can only be imagined and no words can describe it. Diwan Nathamal ki Haveli – The house of the Diwan Nathamal (Haveli) built with Badal Vilas (Tajiya Tower), royal Palace of Maharawal Beri Sal Singh in the nineteenth century. It is fine edifice completed in 1941 V.S. (1885 A.D.) It is carved by two brothers. The silavates or stone carvers were nearly all muslims and their families migrated to pakisthan in 1947. Hati and Laloo were two brothers. They were famous carvers in the Jaisalmer atate. At the time Mohata Nathamal wa Diwan (Prime Minister) of Maharawal Beri Sal Singh, the Haveli which is said to be gifted to Diwan by Maharawal Beri Sal Singh. It is borne out by an Urdu Inscription on the stone table.

The left side of Havelis was designed nd carved by one brother Laloo and the right side was designed and carved by other. The little window on left side of the front door has not the same design as of the little window on the right side of the front door. The front of Haveli and arched windows appear to be pure magic. All the designs and finishing are very attractive. Nothing at Fatehpur Sikri and not even the famous white marble screen in the Taj can be compared, in a light with the exquisite work here. The front of the first floor is quite interesting. There are many features decorated even on the front face, upon which a series of motifs viz. Steam engines cycles, soldier's caparisoned horses, elephants and birds on stone are carved.

The front is formed by seven Patu Pan (name of the stone). Stone in which two projected kanwals, four sets of decorated baris and one of magnificent central Jharokha flanked by one mini Kanwal and one bari on other side. This

five storeyed edifice presentsa fantastic view through the archway. In this Haveli, figures of Chobdar (two cardes of attendants) are to be seen out either side of the main door of the mol. Haveli of Diwans have always been flanked by elephants, here also we see the same. Inside the Mol or Mahal there are some beautiful miniature and wall paintings.

Two architect brothers built it in the 19th century. Interestingly, while one concentrated on the right, the other concentrated on the left and the result is a symphony epitomising the side by side symmetry during construction. Paintings in miniature style monopolise the walls in the interior. Mighty tuskers carved out of yellow sandstone stand guard to the haveli. This haveli was built about 300 years ago and a part of it is still occupied. Salim Singh was the prime minister when Jaisalmer was the capital of the princely state and his mansion has a beautifully arched roof with superb carved brackets in the form of Peacocks. The mansion is just below the hill and it is said that once it had two additional wooden storeys in an attempt to make it as high as the maharaja's palace, but the maharaja had the upper storey torn down. The delicate pagoda like Tazia Tower rises from Badal Mahal (Cloud Palace). Rising in its five-tiered splendour, with each storey graced by a delicately carved balcony, the tower is of historical significance. Muslim craftsmen built it in the shape of a Tazia and gifted it to their royal patron. The house of the Diwan Ssalim Singh who devastated the state nearly one hundred fifty years ago with his extortion and cruelty is magnificently carved towards above the rest of the city. It is a very grand edifice of six storeys of cur-stones and much ornamentation especially on the top storey. There was two more storeys called Rang-Mahal and Kach-Mahal which were destroyed by Maharawal Gaj Singh. There are 38 balconies carved in different designs on the front it was built in the 18th century. This Mahal has beautiful wall fountain at each corner.

Salim Singh Mohata was the son of Diwan Swaroop Singh. Swaroop Singh the P.M. of Rawal Mool Raj II. He was an impressive and bold person. He came of a rich family. He held a great deal of political power and controlled the finance of the state, but the prince and samants were not pleased with his

behaviour. One day he was murdered by a prince when Salim Singh was only 12 years old. This tragedy touched his heart. In course of time he took the revenge by poisoning and murdering many samants and princes and their kinsmen. By the time he came off the age the king Mool Raj II was impressed with Salim Singh and appointed him as his P.M. During his life time the state was left in the hands of Salim Singh his Diwan (Prime Minister) who devastated the country with cruelty and barbarity. He drove out the Paliwal Brahmans who were famous cultivators.

Salim Singh increased the burden of taxes on public particularly on Paliwal Brahmans to increase the state revenue and these were taken forcefully. Therefore, the Paliwal Brahmans vacated the eighty-four villages and went away. Many well-built villages still stand deserted to mark the prosperity of Jaisalmer district which can hardly ever be again attained. Mool Raj II died in 1820 and was succeeded by his grandson Gaj Singh who like predecessor was puppet in the hands of his Prime Minister Salim Singhtill the latter was murdered in 1880 by one of samants. He had seven wives white two others were kept.

He had planned to build a bridge from his Haveli to the palace in fort overlooking the whole city. The king or Rawal was annoyed at this. But he possessed some good qualities. He was a diplomat and a religious-minded person. He a great lover of art. His Haveli is the proof of his interest in stone carving and buildings. **Badal Vilas** – Badal Vilas was built by the late Maharawal Jahawar Singh in the 20th century. The windows and chhatris are handsomely carved and beautifully designed.

In this desert land at Jaisalmer, there is great scope for the development of adventure tourism-Camel Safari, an attraction for tourists in the famous 'desert-fair' of the district.

About 45 kms. from the Jaisalmer Sam village is located. Here you will find the Sam Sand Dunes. Sand dunes in this area are called DHARNA OR DARD. These dunes are 3 km. long and 1 km. wide and ½ km. high. No vegetation can be found on them and their surface is ever changing due to the winds. The wind either heaps and sand into hills or scoops it into deep hollows. They are very difficult to cross as path is shifting daily. The Desert National Park is an excellent example of the ecosystem of the Thar Desert and its rich fauna. The Sudashri forest post is the most ideal place for observing wildlife in the Desert National Park. Sand dunes form less than 20 percent of the Park, which consists of craggy rocks, pavements and compact salt lake bottoms, intermedial areas and fixed dunes.

Its inhabitants include the blackbuck, chinkara, wolf, Indian fox, desert fox, hare and desert cat. Flights of sandfrouse start coming to waterholes from sunrise onwards. One also hear the morning call of the grey partridge. Blue tailed and green bee-eaters, drongos, common and bush quail and Indian rollers are birds, which are commonly found around waterholes. the park is also home to the great Indian Bustard which is peril of Just 17 kms from Jaisalmer and a kilometre away from the Barmer Road are fossilised remains of 180 million-year-old forests. These are beautiful forest vistas and any forester around can

show you. There is a ticket to visit the Park for foreigners Rs 20 and locals Rs 5 plus Rs 10 for vehicle.

In this museum we can see the local costumes, meaning of colours and designs, historical old photographs, paintings, coins, fossils, camel ornaments, musical instruments, many other traditional articles and very old manuscripts. A very informative, well arranged museum with clear and concise explanation in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish about Rajasthan's history, art and culture. Postcards and folk music cassettes are also available.

Founded on 1st February, 1997 and inaugurated by H.E. Shri K.R. Narayanan, the president of India, situated very near to the Jaisalmer Folklore Museum. The desert cultural centre has details of old history arts, culture and traditions of Rajputana. Varieties of folk musical instruments, old costumes, manuscripts, coins and the way of life of village and villagers. Old paintings and many other traditional items with explanations in concise and clear English. As mentioned earlier there are several ancient first, palaces, religious palaces, havelis and other buildings along with the folk arts and handicrafts which provide a sound base to the development of tourism in Jaisalmer.

The Fort 'SONAR' – It is the fort, the second oldest in Rajasthan (oldest being Chittorgarh). The fort stands on a hill 250 feet above the surrounding country. Solid blocks of stone have been used for a buttress wall, 15 feet round the hill. The hill itself is 500 feet long and the fort at top the 500 feet long, and 250 feet at the widest point. Above buttress wall on the hill are the ramparts, the turrets and half towers. The battlements are a complete chain of defense rising 10 meters (30 feet) above the hill. The name of the hill is Tricuta of Gorhara. The fort of Jaisalmer was founded by Maharawal "Jaisal" in 1156 A.D. The fort stands on a hill which overlooks the town from the south. The hills run almost from south to north.

It has four gates – Akhai pol (Ganesh Pol), Suraj Pol, Bhuta Pol and Hava Pol. The first gate Akhai Pol was built long after the forth and been built. The Suraj Pol is the main entrance of the fort and is fine massive entrance built of large blocks of stones. The Hava Pol is a massive gate-way surmounted by the Palace, the lattices and porches which are handsomely carved and designed.

There are three walls. First wall supporting the hill is called Patha. It was built by Jain Panchayat in 15th century. At that time Maharawal Lakshman Singh was the ruler of Jaisalmer state. The second buttress-wall, 5 metres high around the hill was built by Maharawal Bhim Singh in 1578 A.D. Third wall is the main wall of the fort. Three gates and four towers were buily by Maharawal Bhim and Maharawal Manohar in 16th century. Many round shaped left on the towers were used as weapon to check the enemy from entering the fort during battle.

There are five beautifully carved Raj Mahals inside the fort viz. Rang Mahal, Sarvotam Vilas, Akhai Vilas and Moti Mahal. Rang Mahal was built by mool Raj II. There were some old painting and pictures inside the Mahal. These paintings belongs to the Mughal and Rajput-sculpture. The Gaj Mahal was built by Maharawal Gaj Singh in 1884 A.D. Both the sides of Gaj Mahal have beautiful carvings. The balconies of the palace are very attractive and very delicately carved.

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