

# Peer-Kho-Cave: The tourism is based on history and myth

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In the history of Jammu, the Peer Kho Temple or the Shrine of Peer Kho is famous city. It is also a city of Jammu among others cities. Every year, a huge turnover of pilgrims visits to see the oldest temples of the city. All the different transit phases of the moon are seen during the period of Puranmash, Amavasya and Ekadashi. The temple is congested also by numerous devotees during the time period of some of the prime festivals of Jammu, namely, Shivratri, Raksha Bandhan, Shravan Puranmashi and Poornima. This temple is mainly covered by a Shiva Temple, and the Shiva lingam is placed inside a moderately sized cave, and is a very peaceful place.

It is constructed with white marble on a rectangular platform. The copper snake or Naga is constructed with black stone lingam for its ornamentation. This temple termed in Hindi and the Jallari or Yoni of is covered with a sheet of silver; a copper vessel which is hanged in position kept to pour water continuously on the lingam. There is present some proves about it that the lower portion of the lingam temple was framed during the reign of the king and a close resemblance bears with some other characteristics to ones of Purmandal temple and it was also constructed during the Dogra regime. The Peer Mitha and the Peer Kho temple of the city of Jammu are called as the real jewels of the medieval period. According to the some historical records, these temples were framed for the Peer, Saint Siddha Ghareeb Nath in 15th Century A.D, during the ruling reign of Raja Ajaib Dev. At a heart breaking depth of twenty to thirty feet, the caves are set up in the underground. The Peer Kho cave is situated on the bank of river Tawi and it can be mostly reliance that with name of Jamvant, most of the people worship it as the bear god had meditated in this cave in the earlier time. The vicinity of the Panchbakhtar temple and the Ranbireshwar Temple framed the temple to dedicate the Lord Shiva and are all kept along the river Tawi. These temples are known as the Jamvant cave which are located on an altar of igneous rocks and also filleted with the sedimentary deposits from the river and are settled on the banks of a circular road in the Northeast of Jammu city which are included in the acacia jungle. Two opposite sides of the Peer Kho temple has a large sized courtyard with an ensemble of three modern and ancient shikharas. The stairs of the temple have an arched gateway for leading to the temple. The stairs are tall in height and pink in colour with marble flooring and beautiful railings on its periphery. The temple has a long marbled verandah with mosaic floor. It has also an entrance to enter into the temple from the Pacca Danga via the Jullaka Mohalla.

The dome of the temple is modernly designed with the stone pictures of lotus. This dome has as an entrance to the cave and is sketched with charming drawings on the ceilings which assimilate a strong and stark Mughal and Dogra influence with floral motifs at the centre of it. The design of paintings of the temple keeps a similarity with the Ram Nagar palace complex, which is located in the Udhampur District of the province of Jammu. Jammu school of painting has used different kinds of the colour indigo to paint it which belongs to the erstwhile era of the 19th century. At the premises of the temple also carries a temple at the corner of it which is dedicated to a Devi. The shrines of temple is constructed with white marble and equipped with good looking and pretty pictures of a goddess placed in a glass casing. On the right side of the temple are present some constructed quarters for different types of staff, attendants and workers of the temple. The temple is controlled by a Mahant who owns the ownership of the temple and the charge is rotated from time to time.



Plate1: The beautiful pictures of underground stairs of the temple Peer-Kho Cave.



Plate 2: Attractive image of rock pit which is looking like a trocima of a eye. Actually this is the design of the entrance of the cave.



Plate 3: The beautiful stone picture of a round shaped alter of the God Shiva where a snake is standing around a shivlinga shaped black stone and small size of pebbles.



Plate 4: The images of two opposite color stone statues which are standing behind of a Linga Bedi or Alter of Shiva. Among them, one is colored with slight orange and one is completely black.



Plate 5: The picture of an altar of Peer which is constructed with beautiful mosaic. Here small size of marbles are used and a brownish color big dish shaped is kept reversely.



Plate 6: Clourful statues of different goddes which are decorated with lots of ornaments and dresses.



Plate 7: Lustering entrance of the cave which is constructed with some round shaped rocks on the guard walls of street and here is present also a pit on one wall for coming of lights in day time. The raw is built up of with marble.



Plate 8: A notice board is showing something about the cave where is written as-“During the reign of Raja Biram Dev of Jammu (1454-95) a famous Jogi Guru Garb Nath. Belonging to the Guru Gorakhnath order came to Jammu and resided at Peer Khoh. Khoh means Cave in the loyal dialect. He came to be known as Peer-I-Khoh and thus with passage of time the Cave got the name Peer Khoh. The Cave is also known Jamwant Gufa (Cave) as bear hero of Ramayana is believed to have mediated here. A Shivalinga is established inside the Cave. Devotees through the Cave on Puranmashi, Amavasya and Ekadashi and during Shivratri.”



Plate 9: A black standing statue of bear hero of Ramayana with his arms the *Gada* and lots lamps are surrounded up with burning flames. The statue is also decorated with a flower necklace of marigold.



Plate 10: A beautiful picture of stairs which moves upwards through a door and also divided with a steel barricade for being separated of men and women.



Plate 11: A nice image of some colourful wall statues at the back side of a big tree and two alter of small Shivalings.

Within the courtyard there is present a Tulsi Plant on a pedestal in its premises. It carries in reminiscences of the architectural style of the Dogras and has become a sport in the Zorawar Singh Residence cum Palace complex and the Ram Nagar palace. At the center of the temple, there can be seen a continuous smoke emitting shrine which is a very unique feature of this temple. Different types of idols of gods and goddess are fulfilled with the life size idols of Lord Vishnu, Lord Rama, Sita the entire temple and with a simulated and high platform to protect it from the inversion of floods from the Tawi River. This thin route connects to another cave along with the name of Nau Devi's Guffa or the shrine of Nine Goddesses. This cave covers with a brilliant view of statues of nine goddesses which are settled on a platform and the statues look accomplished for their decoration with red sarees. The name of nine Goddesses Shri Mata Sakandanatha Devi, Shri Mata Maha Devi, Shri Mata ShellaPuri Devi, Shri Mata Bhadrachani Devi, Shri Mata Kushamandra Devi, Shri Mata Chandra Ghanta Devi, Shri Mata Kalarathri Devi, Shri Mata Katyani Devi and Shri Mata Siddhi Devi. There is also present a familiar Peer Kho Mohalla or locality and it is known as an ancient Shiv Nath, which is situated at the opposite of it. A small temple of Shani Devta also located on the right side of the Peer Kho temple.

At a distance of 3 kilometres from this temple can be seen the Kashmir Government Arts emporium. There are present lots of shops in the markets or bazaars near the cave with various names like Raghunath Bazar at a distance of 3.6, Hari Market at a distance of 3.3 kilometres, Gole market at a distance of 0.7 kilometres and the Shoppers Paradise at a distance of 0.9 kilometres from the temple. Any visitor who comes to see the temples like Peer-kho Mohalla or others temples can also purchase any goods from these shops for their great work of the handicrafts and handloom. On the outside of the temple, there are present lots of merchants who sell beautiful, charming, fabulous handmade shawls of different designs and rich colours. At a stone's throw distance of 3 kilometers from the temple also situate other places like Raghunath Temple, Bahu Fort and Amar Mahal Palace and the Nandini Wildlife Sanctuary.

The temple opens for the public at 5 a.m. in the morning and functions its activities up to 7 p.m. in the evening on all weekdays, weekends and public holidays. The temple remains closed for the visitors at around 12 o'clock in the afternoon. Capturing of photos are completely banned here, so, cameras and phone are not allowed within the premises of the temple. Pets are not allowed with their masters

inside the temple premises. The local people of Jammu shows their high regards and devotion to this temple and people have reliance on this temple for the gateway to different types of religious importance. This temple is connected with the numerous buses available from the city and various travel agency's vehicles like local taxi's, buses, tempo travelers etc., for very short distance of 4 kilometres from the main city of Jammu. Different type's hotel and lodges set up their own business near the Peer-Kho temple to provide comfortable accommodation with modern luxurious facilities. Hotel Asia Jammu Tawi, Hotel Novelty, Raghunath Hotel, Maharaja Hotel and other different hotels and lodges are seen here. The entire areas of the Peer Kho temple and the Peer Kho cave becomes attractive and charming for its beautification to the visitors of tourists and also for the local people of nearby places. If someone is an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva, he or she should not miss the chance of paying a visit to this place to offer his or her prayer, respect and devotion.

The Shrine of the Peer Kho Temple is an example of oldest temple among the all temples of the city. A huge number of devotees are crowded here to visit on Purnamashi, Amavasya and Ekadashi. Different types of festivals are arranged here on Shivratri, Purnimaamd Shravan Purnamashi or Raksha Bandhan. A rectangular, white, marble platform is prepared for the lingam which is settled in a small decorated cave. The black stone lingam is equipped with a copper snake or Naga and a Silver sheet covers the Jallari or Yoni and a top copper vessel is kept on top, hanging in position to pour water continuously on the lingam. The lower part of the body of the lingam and other features resemblance with the shrine of Purmandal temple complex and Dogra regime may be same of earlier period. In the city of temples, the Peer Kho Temple and Peer Mitha are present at the same place. According to the unconfirmed historical records of 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D., Raja Ajaib Dev settled the temple in the time of his reign and gave the name 'Peer'. The positions of two caves are near about twenty to thirty feet below from the ground level. The local people respect the Peer Kho cave temple always. The old historic spot shrine of Lord Shiva is also known as Jamvant cave. The sedimentary deposit of the River and acacia jungle in Northeast city covers with amidst igneous rocks and the other side of circular road covers up the above the terrace of Tawi River.

The entrance is constructed with pink, high arched gateway and a white marble stair with a railing leads to the temple complex. A long verandah is also set up with marble and mosaic flooring, which opens to another entrance on the opposite side from the Pacca Danga via Jullaka Mohalla. On the left side of the courtyard flourish with three shikhars, two of them modern and one ancient. The modern structure with stone finial and an inverted lotus is merged for the low round ribbed Gumband or dome. Due to the successive flooding, and receding of water for centuries, a boulder conglomerate deposit of the river Tawi is set up the entrance to the cave shrines. The painting style of later Mughal or Dogra is used to decorate the round domed entrance leading to the caves with beautiful artistic quality on the ceiling and with floral motifs in the centre of the dome. The Dogra style is also used for painting of the periphery of wall, arched pillars and ceiling which is similar to the motifs of Ram Nagar Palace complex in Udhampur District of Jammu province. The colour scheme & the style of paintings carry the painting style of the mid-19th century of Jammu school of painting with emphasis on the indigo colour.

The qualities of recent origin with brass finials prove on the other rectangular shikharas. On the right side of courtyard, there present also a Devi temple with white marble miniature shrine and it glorifies with beautiful pictures of a goddess in a glass casing. The residential quarters for the staff of the temple are standing in a series of line on the right side of temple. The name of the present Mahant of the temple is Peer Rattan Nath who holds the Gadhi or the ownership of the temple. A low-level passage is used to a small opening for the round domed entrance of the temple. This passage bifurcates into the Amar Nath Guffa cave on the right side. The low ceiling channel further leads to Siva shrine or the Amar Nath Cave Siva Temple known as Jamvant Cave after one of the heroes of the famous Indian Epic of the Ramayana when came here, after then it known as Jamvant which leads further to the low ceiling channel of Siva shrine or the Amar Nath Cave Siva Temple. On the left side, there is present another small opening which moves further downwards to the Nav Durga shrine.

There is present also some gods and goddess who are kept in a long grided temple decorated with life size idols. These are Lord Rama, Sita, Lord Vishnu etc. The narrow entrance is extended further in a winding manner with a large covered courtyard and another small opening to the Nau Devi's Guffa or Nine Devi's Cave shrine is also extended. The statues of nine Goddesses make a long platform with an attractive red robes which is a wonderful view to observe in a cave shrine. The presence of these Nav Devis also makes this place charming and capturing place. An igneous rock used for making two separate passages for entry and exit of the Cave which is twenty feet's below the level of the temple. The religious environment of this place makes it peaceful, calm and serene for meditation and adoration of these gods and goddess. The foundation of a Tulsi plant within the premises of courtyard of the temple also indicates beautiful reflection of the Dogra style of architectural quality which is found in Ram Nagar palace at Ram Nagar and at Zorawar Singh Residence cum Palace Complex of Vijaypur in Reasi.



Plate12: This the picture of beautifully decorated marble gate of the temple Peer-Kho Cave which is constructed with different types design and with written name and established year.

Any tourism makes fulfill for any person when he or she gets some amusement from his or her tour. Roaming or wandering in a place for someone can refresh his or her mind with physical changes also. So, we can say that this is an ancient place of Jammu city which provides lots of historical and myth's knowledge. Lots of things and events are related with this cave which gives us many historical and myth experiences also. Peer is a name of the person who related with Muslim community, but it has been provided for a Hindu communal Mandir or temple. Total description of the entire areas makes also attractive and charming for tourism.

The decoration, painting style and drawing of the all temples give lots good characteristics of an ideal temple. The presence of different idols with decorated qualities makes people attracted. Total structure of the temples especially Peer-Kho Cave makes people charming. Suitable colours, design on the walls, underground decoration, separated entry passage, construction of steel bifurcates, use of colourful marbles, mosaic flooring quality and beautifully decorated courtyard of the temple etc. all can make for attraction for all people of the world, The practical knowledge of myths can be seen the tours of this particular place, The presence of nearer markets or bazaars, facilities of foods and lodging and different types of shops of different types of useful household material makes also attraction for this place. The systematic control of temple and services of it also are good and suitable for tours and travels for all the people of the world. Suitable communication and provide of conveniences by the local people and the government of Jammu city are very important for tourist's attraction and charming.

