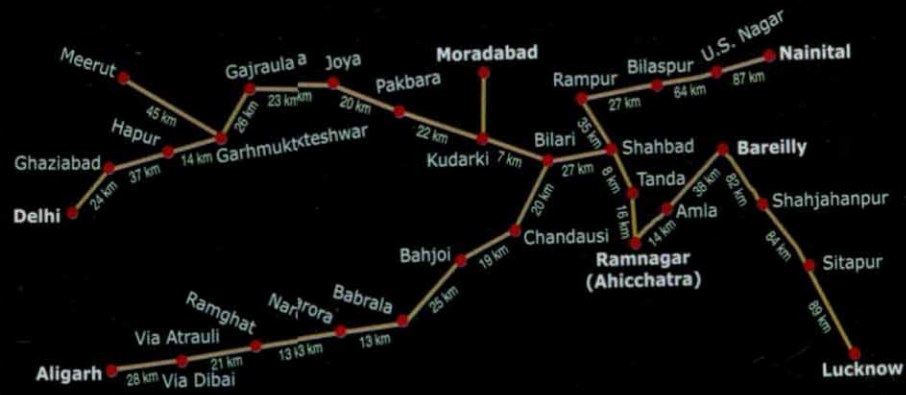


ROUTE MAP TO AHICCHATRA



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Ahicchatra



Ahicchatra

The extensive remains of ancient Ahicchatra, the capital city of Northern Panchala, of the Mahabharata period, have been discovered near Ramnagar village of Aonla tehsil, in district Bareilly.

History

During the first excavations at Ahicchatra (1940-44) the Archaeologists came across Painted Grey ware, linked with the arrival of the Aryans in the Ganga Yamuna Valley. About five thousand coins belonging to ages earlier than that of the Guptas have been recovered from the excavation site. The Archaeologists also found some excellent masterworks of Indian terracotta art at Ahicchatra. The Archaeological relics give us an insight into the prevailing culture of the region from the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC up to 11th Century AD.

Under the Guptas, Ahicchatra was one of the provinces into which the Gupta Empire was divided. The Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudragupta refers to a powerful king named 'Achyuta', ruling Ahicchatra. The material evidence during the Gupta period at Ahicchatra gives the impression that it was a not a large and prosperous centre like the preceding phase. The monuments under the Guptas are mainly religious indicating that Ahicchatra had then become mainly a religious centre.

The Jain Tirthankara Parshvanath is said to have attained Kaivalya at Ahicchatra. The city was also influenced by Buddha and his followers.

After the fall of the Guptas in the latter half of the 6th century the district of Bareilly came under the domination of the Maukharis. Under the Emperor Harsha (606-47 AD) the district was the part of the Ahicchatra Bhukti. During Harsha's reign the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang visited Ahicchatra, about 635 AD. He mentions seeing 12 Buddhist monasteries with around 1000 monks and nine Brahminical temples with about 300 worshipers of Lord Shiva, whose bodies were smeared with ash.

Archaeological finds

In modern times, Ahicchatra was first visited by Captain Hodgson, a British surveyor, who saw the ancient fortress popular as 'Pandu Fort' among villagers. Hodgson in his report mentions 32 towers of the fort, 28 to 30 feet in height. The ancient fortress at present is 19,400 feet or 3.5 km in length, lying between the Ramganga and the Ganghan rivers.



Lord Parshvanath



Head of Parvati, 5th Century A.D., Terracotta

Excavations at Ahicchatra started during the years 1940-44, under ASI. Painted Grey ware, associated with the advent of the Aryans in the Ganga Yamuna Valley, was recognized for the first time in the earliest levels of this site. It has also been one of the richest sites in India from the point of view of the total yield of terracottas. Fresh archaeological excavations at Ahicchatra have been carried out during the period 2007-08 and 2008-09 by the

Agra Circle of the Archaeological Survey of India.

A fresh light has been thrown on the extension of the settlement beyond the fortification wall. Apart from the structures belonging to various periods, the excavation has also yielded a variety of antiquities. Important among which are the coins of Achyu (ta), the king mentioned in the Prayag Prashasti of Samudragupta. Other important coins are of Phalgunimitra, Bhanumitra, Agnimitra, etc.

Other finds include tubular amulets, antimony rods, inscribed object of copper, beads of semi-precious stones including carnelian, quartz, amethyst, garnet, chert, etc., spools/ear-studs of lead, and a few punch-marked coins of silver and copper-silver alloy.

Jainism and Ahicchatra

The history of Jainism at Ahicchatra starts from the period of Yugadidev Shri Adinath Bhagwan as per Jain mythology. As per the Digambara, it is the vihar (visiting) place of all the Teerthankars after Yugadidev Shri Adinath Bhagwan. This is said to known as Shankhavati, Ahichakra, Parichakra, Chhatravati and Ahikshetra as well in the past. Some time it was the wealthiest state, Vaibhav Nagari, having a perimeter of 50 kms., consisting of a number of temples, a big establishment and markets. Aanwala, Vajeerganj and Sampani Nagari villages were the part of this state.

Beyond the period of Bhagwan Parshvanath, being the capitol state of Nag Rajas this was a famous Jain state. During his Vihar, Bhagwan Parshvanath had visited this place. He used to meditate in the forests of Ahicchatra, during which Meghmali or Kamatasur created an incessant shower of rains inundating the entire area, in order to disturb his meditation. Parshvanath got immersed in water up to his neck. To protect him, Nagraja accompanied by his queens, appeared holding a canopy of his thousand hoods over Lord Parshvanath's head and coiled himself around his body. This led to the place being called as Ahicchatra.



Terracotta Image of Ganga found from Ahicchatra Excavations, 5th Century, National Museum, New Delhi



Tis Chaubisi Temple



'Tikhwal wale Baba ki Vedi'

consisting different types of medicated herbs. Many idols, Stupas & Stambhs of the periods of Kushan & Guptas have been discovered, proving Ahicchatra's importance during these periods.

Present day site attractions

Digambar Jain Temple - This temple built in 1978, contains 7 vedis with images of Lord Parshvanath in various postures. The earliest image belongs to the 10th century. This vedi is famous as 'Tikhwal wale Baba ki Vedi'. Another 6 ft. high image of Lord Mahavir is installed on the second vedi. While images of Lord Parshvanath in different postures occupy the other vedis.

Tis Chaubisi Temple - Built in 2002, this temple contains 720 idols of the 24 Jain Tirthankars, with a 13.5 feet image of Lord Parshvanath in the centre.

Bhagwan Parshvanath-Padmavati Temple - This temple was commenced in the year 2007. A large image of Lord Parshvanath occupies the central position, while Maa Padmavati and Lord Dhanendra are on either sides.

New Chaubisi Temple Complex - A new Chaubisi Temple Complex is being built near the old temple complex in an area of 17,500 sq. mts. and is likely to commence soon.



Lord Parshvanath

King Vasupal built-up the temple of Bhagwan Parshvanath during his rule. It is mentioned in "Kaivalaymata" written by Acharya Shri Udyotansuri that during the 6th century of Vikram, Guptavanshi King Harigupt took Deeksha here. Describing Ahicchatra, in "Vividh Teerth Kalp", Acharya Shri Jinprabhusuri has given a vast description of two temples of Bhagwan Parshvanath, the presence of the idol of the Adhisthayika Devi of Bhagwan Neminath, Shri Ambadevi near the fort and about the forests & gardens



Shwetambar Jain Temples - A beautiful Shwetambar Jain Temple is presently under construction near the old Shwetambar Temple. The entire temple structure, being made with buff sandstone, is going to be a unique architectural delight with thousand of images from the Jain Pantheon on display.



New Shwetambar Jain Temple

Language: Hindi, English, Urdu.

Temple Timings :

Temples at Ahicchatra remain open between 5.00 am to 10.00 pm during the summer months, while between 6.00 am to 9.00 pm during the winters.

Accommodation Facilities :

Both Digambar and Shwetambar Temples provide for accommodation facilities in the temple Dharmshalas. The Dharmshalas, equipped with all modern facilities, provide for more than 200 non AC and 35 AC rooms, along with Dinning facilities.

For bookings and reservation :

Manager, Digambar Jain Dharmshala: 9568004800
Manager, Shwetambar Jain Dharmshala: 9897984231

How to Reach

Air : The nearest airports are Delhi- 250 km, Pantnagar- 147 km and Lucknow- 302 km.

Rail : By rail route one has to reach Aonla (14 km from Ramnagar), well connected to various destinations by Northern Railways.

Road : Ramnagar Ahicchatra can be conveniently reached by private taxis and UPSRTC Bus service. Major Road Distances : Aonla- 14 km, Badayun- 52 km, Bareilly- 52 km, Rampur- 60 km, Chandausi- 65 km, Moradabad- 89 km, Delhi- 250 km.



Local Transport : Tongas and Tempos are available for local transport.

Medical Facilities : PHC, Ramnagar. Ph: 9219553239



General Information

Climate: April to June are hot summer months while July to September is rainy season, winter months of October to March are the best season to visit.

Dress: Cottons in summer months while woollens in winter.

Police Station, Aonla :
05823-222027

Post office:
05824-236430

Banks :
District Co-op. Bank :
9412371959
Bank of Baroda :
9568000124