

The Significance of the Divine Ghats Of Varanasi

It is believed in Hinduism that in the city of ghats, the soul leaves the human body and rises up towards salvation, which is named Varanasi, Benaras or Kashi. The innumerable ghats in Varanasi, as there are more than 84 ghats in this city, are considered to link the microcosm, known as the human world to the macrocosm, the divine spiritual world.

Assi Ghat

Assi Ghat is located at the southern end of the city of Varanasi, and is a very important ghat as several mentions of this can be found in early literature like the puranas. There is a tale associated with this ghat that is, Goddess Durga after slaughtering the demons Shumbha and Nishumbha, threw her sword (Khadga) away to a place, which resulted in the origin of the river asi, on whose banks this ghat is situated.

Manikarnika Ghat

This is the famous cremation ground, especially for the Maharajas of Kashi. Here Lord Shiva is in the form of Tarakeshvara, who gave the Taraka mantra in the ears of the dead. Also inside this ghat there is the Cakra- Puskarini Kunda ("Discus Lotus- Pool", the holy pool of Vishnu).

Dasasvamedha Ghat

This is a most ancient ghat bustling with people, where according to a fable, Divodasa, Lord Brahma, the creator in the holy trinity of the Hindus, executed the ten horses sacrifice (das-asvamedha). This ghat is famous for its temples of Brahmaesvara, Sulatankevara, Abhaya Vinayaka, Varahesvara, the Ganga ("goddess"), and Bandi Devi.

Jain Ghat

This ghat is now shared by Jains on the southern side and Mallahas (boatman) on the northern part, which was originally a part of Vaccharaja ghat.

Cheta Singh Ghat

This is a historical ghat with a fort, named after Chet Singh who fought against the Warren Hastings in 1781. Originally named "Khirki Ghat", this place is now divided into four parts Cheta Singh, Nirvani, Niranjani and Shivala.

Mahanirvani Ghat

This is a legendary ghat located at the north end of Nirvani Ghat, called after Mahanirvani sect of Naga Saints, where Acharya Kapila Muni lived in the 7th century A.D.

Hanuman Ghat

This ghat was originally named as Ramesvaram Ghat, which was recognized by Lord Ram himself, but Tulsidas, the saint, in the 18th century made a Hanuman temple in this ghat renaming it as Hanuman Ghat.

Harish Chandra Ghat

This is named after King Harish Chandra , who according to a myth designed the cremation land here for the insistence of truth and charity, for which the Gods rewarded him by restoring his abandoned thrown and dead son. At times this place is also referred to as “Adi Manikarnika”, the original cremation ground. Old Harnampapa water, a tirtha is also centered here.

Sitala Ghat

This is the southern expansion of Dasasvamedha Ghat, which is named after the temple of Sitala, where festivals occur on the 8th day of Sitala Ashtami in the months of Chaitra, Vaishaka, Jaishtha and Asadh and on other marriage ceremonies.

Prayaga Ghat

Named after the temple of Prayagagesvara, this ghat is considered as holy as the place Prayaga, as the effects of performing rituals here and the original prayaga are believed to be same. This Thirtharaja is actually situated on the union of the rivers of Ganga, Yamuna and hidden Saraswti.

Tripura Bhairavi Ghat

Named after the temple of Tripura Bhairavi, female counterpart of Tripuresvara, this ghat was made concrete by king of Banaras and pt. Mayananda Giri in the late 18th century.

Bajirio Ghat

Named after Bajirao Pesava, this ghat was built in 1735 by himself, with a unique feature that the whole structure is a bit squatted into the earth, since its creation. It is also known as Dattatreya ghat, after the temple of Dattatreyesvara.

Scindhia Ghat

Originally known as Viresvara Ghat, due to the temple of Viresvara at the top, this ghat was renamed after Daulatarao Scindhia in 1937, who fortified the ghat. The top of the ghat has idols of Vamadeva, Vsistha and Atmaviresvara.

Raja Gwalior Ghat

Madhorao Pesava erected both of these and Rama Ghat.

Mangala Gauri Ghat

Mangala Gauri, which means auspicious is one of the 9 motherly white Goddesses, is from whom this ghat gets its name.

Pancaganga Ghat

This Ghat is famous as the confluence of five sacred streams, of Ganga, the Yamuna, the Sarsvati, the Dhupapapa and the Kirana, of which only the first is visible and the rest are considered manifestations.

Thus, these are the main ghats of Varanasi, where the Ganga-arati in the honor of Ganga at the sunrise and sunset are a treat to the eyes.