
A Study and History of the Taj Mahal

The Taj Mahal is an incredible mausoleum that contains the remains of the late queen Mumtaz Mahal. In 1612 a Persian princess called Arjumand Bano Begum was wedded to Shah Jahan (then known as prince Khurram). He would later become the fifth Mughal monarch. Arjumand Bano, whose name was later changed to Mumtaz Mahal (the Special ornament of the Palace), was the emperor's second wife. Simultaneously a spouse and a counselor, the queen often accompanied the emperor on his travels and armed expeditions. Such was the influence of the queen on her sovereign-husband, that Shah Jahan was motivated to make acts of assistance and benevolence to his subjects, whereas he had shown no such inclinations prior to his second wedding. While accompanying her husband on a military operation in Burhanpur, Mumtaz Mahal expired while bringing forth her 14th child. So inconsolable was the monarch that the entire court was cast in mourning for some two-and-a-half years. Historic records assert that six months after the queen's demise, the king's mane, and beard had grown white. Shah Jahan was determined to erect a shrine in his favorite wife's memory that the world would recognize.

The dead queen was hurriedly brought to Agra, and buried in a guarded plot on the banks of Yamuna River. A crowd of the greatest architects was conscripted to create a map for constructing the mausoleum. In due course, Ustad Isa, a Persian engineer, was summoned to draw the structure. This master architect, together with his novice Ustad Ahmad, began the production of the edifice. The dome, though, was styled by Ismail Khan. Some 20,000 stonecutters from across the nations of the known world were engaged to labor incessantly for 22 years. The best marble was purchased from the district of Markana, adjacent to Jodhpur. Valuable as well as semi precious rocks were acquired from foreign nations under the jurisdiction of the Mughals. The building of the main house of the Taj Mahal went on from 1632 to 1653. However, its twin outlying edifices, one of which is a mosque, were finished in 1643. The entire monument was completed in 1648.

Later on, the mausoleum was installed with luxuriant furnishings. Persian rugs and golden lanterns embellished the inner sanctums of the Taj. The invader Suraj Mal carried two silver gateways away in 1764, which were installed at the doorway. Amir Husein Ali Khan also stole the expanse of pearls that decorated the stone sarcophagi. After the conclusion of its creation, when King Shah Jahan inspected the Taj, he commanded his workers to hack off the right arm of the chief architect Ustad Isa, so he would not be able to create such a grand and magnificent structure for any other ruler. There is an additional legend that states that Shah Jahan was considering erecting an extra Taj Mahal across the river in black granite. He built another edifice, but it was not as magnificent as the former.

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The balanced reflection of the Taj Mahal is replicated in the water channel in front of the structure. This channel partitions the garden, and is coated by the outstanding polish and comprehensive carvings in the marbles. The Taj rests on an elevated, square dais (186 x 186 feet), with its four angles abridged, thus creating an uneven octagon. The architectural blueprint employs the interlocking arabesque model, in which each component stands on its own, and flawlessly integrates with the core edifice. It utilizes the values of the balance of architectural fundamentals and self-replicating geometry (Koch, 2006). Constructed with red sandstone on the edges of the podium and preserving the monument, there are two erections: a visitor's house (Mihman Khana) in the east, and a prayer enclosure (Masjid) in the west. Its striking architectural exquisiteness is beyond description, especially at sunrise and at dusk. The Taj appears to radiate in the glow of a full moon. On a cloudy morning it often seems that the Taj is hovering over the air, when seen from across the river Jamuna.

The romantic history of the Taj Mahal, along with its fascinating beauty, is an obvious motivation for the desire to travel to India. From the outside one perceives a huge and beautiful edifice that is constructed with yellow and white marble. Four well-tended gardens encircle this ancient castle, and the river that flows through it. The Taj Mahal is the most striking creation that the Mughals consecrated to India. It is celebrated for its evenness of proportions, its complicated details, and most of all its white unblemished marble, which alters its shades from sunrise to midnight. While it shines spotless white at midday, it seems silver in color when there is a full moon (Shors, 2004).

While the mausoleum is evidently funereal, one can also sense a figurative and emblematic implication in the mausoleum. This aspect likewise accounts for the omnipotence of a ruler that was obsessed with his own grandeur. Some of the greatest creations, developments and advances can also be accredited to perseverance. The Taj Mahal allows the viewer, who is untouched by its romantic history, to be inspired by the perseverance of the workers who worked on it for years. Professionally, it remains a challenge to modern architects who receive inspiration from its articulate designs (Tilotson, 2008).

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