

Kangra

Kangra which was known anciently as 'Trigarta' is one of the most picturesque valleys in Himachal Pradesh. It is sheltered by the massive Dhauladhar range of mountains, rich in culture and history. The history of Kangra valley dates back to vedic times, more than 3,500 years ago. It finds mention in the 'Puranas' the Mahabharata and in Rajtarangani. Kangra valley is one of the most picturesque valleys in the Himalayas. It is sheltered by the Dhauladhar and this majestic mountain range surpasses all others in its grandeur. the history of Kangra dates back to the Vedic times more than 3,500 years ago. The famous 'Bajeshwari Devi' temple is located in the town. Kangra was revaged by foriegn aggression a number of times. Despite all this, the arts and crafts of the region continues to develop and find lyrical expression. Kangra town is situated at the confluence of the Baner and Majhi streams, overlooking the Banganga torrent is famous for temples, forts and now a speedily emerging as a business centre.

Kangra : General Information

Altitude : 1,597 meters.

Headquarter : Dharamshala

Location : The district lies between 31°40' and 32°25' East Longitudes and 70°35' and 77°05' North Latitudes. It is bounded on the South-West by Una district, on the North-West by district Gurdaspur of Punjab, on the North by Lahaul-Spiti and Chamba districts, on the East by Kullu and Mandi districts, and on the South it touches Hamirpur district.

Access by Air : Nearest airport is Gaggal airport located 13 km. from Kangra. Other airports having regular service are : Jammu 200 km. from Kangra, Amritsar 208 km. from Kangra and Chandigarh 255 km. from Kangra

Access by Rail : Nearest broad gauge railhead is Pathankot 90 km. A narrow gauge railway line between Pathankot and Jogindernagar passes through Kangra, 17 km. from Dharamshala.

Access by Road : Almost each and every part of the state is linked by roads.

Distance : Chandigarh 239 km., Delhi 514 km., Nangal 145 km., Jalandhar 166 km., Hoshiarpur 128 km., Mandi 147 km., Jwalamukhi 55 km., Kullu 214 km., Manali 252 km., Chamba 192 km. and Shimla 322 km.

Famous Places around Kangra :

Maharana Pratap Sagar Lake :- It is made of Beas River. In 1960, a dam was built on the

Beas river and this dam resulted in a huge Maharana Pratap Sagar Lake (once known as Pong Lake). This huge mass of water varies from 180 sq. km. to 400 sq. km. In 1983, the Sagar was declared a wildlife sanctuary and over 220 species of birds belonging to 54 families have been sighted over the waters and the fringing mud-banks - these include black-headed gulls, plovers, terns, ducks, water-fowl and egrets. The land portion of the sanctuary has barking deer, sambar, wild boars, nilgai, leopards and claw-less otters. 27 species and sub-species of fish belonging to six families have been recorded in the Sagar's waters.

Chamunda Devi Temple :- It is 15 km. from Kangra. This temple is situated on the right bank of the 'Baner' stream with the Dhauladhar as a backdrop, this has an idol of goddess Chamunda, who, it is said, was given the boon to fulfil the desires of those who worshipped her. On the back of the temple is a cave niche where a stone 'Lingam' under a boulder represents Nandi Keshwar (Shiva).

Jwalamukhi :- 30 km. from Kangra and 56 km. from Dharamshala. This place is famous for Jwalamukhi, the 'Flaming Goddess'. It is one of the most popular Hindu temple in Northern India. There is no idol and the flame is considered a manifestation of the Goddess. The eternal flame issues from the rock sanctum and is constantly fed by the priests. Two important fairs are held during the Navratras, in early April and in mid October.

Brijeshwari Devi Temple :- Just outside the town is the temple dedicated to Brajeshwari Devi. Known once for its legendary wealth, this temple was subject to successive depredation by invaders from the North. Mohammed of Ghazni is known to have departed with a king's ransom in gold, silver and jewels in 1009. Destroyed completely in 1905 by an earthquake, it was rebuilt in 1920.

Masroor Rock Temples :- 40 km. from Kangra. Masroor is known for its monolithic temples. There are 15 monolithic rock-cut temples in the Indo-Aryan style, richly carved. The temples, partly ruined now, are profusely decorated with sculptural ornamentation conceived in the same manner as the great temple of Kailash at Ellora in Maharashtra. The main shrine contains three stone images of Ram, Lakshman and Sita.

Kangra Fort :- The historic fort of Kangra was built by Bhuma Chand. This fort had been the centre of attraction for the rulers of northern India, since a long time. The first attack on the fort was made by the Raja of Kashmir 'Shreshtha' in 470 A.D. In 1846 Kangra fort fell into the hands of the British. Kangra fort is located on the bank of the river Banganga at the height of 350 feet. In the foreyard of the fort are the temple of 'Laxmi Narayan' and 'Adinath' located in the Kangra fort is dedicated to Jainism. Inside the fort are two ponds one of them is called 'Kapur Sagar'. At present the fort is under the control of 'Archaeological Survey of India'. It was badly damaged in 1905 earthquake.

Taragarh Palace :- Muslims used this place to propagate the ideas of Islam and in 1933 the 'Nawab of Bhawalpur' built a palace there, which was named as Alhilal. Till 1947, the place remained as the Summer capital of the Nawab. From 1947-49 it was used as warehouse by the Punjab government. In 1949 it came in the possession of 'Maharani Tara' the wife of Maharaja Hari Singh of Jammu and mother of Raja Karan Singh. In 1951 it was converted into a Motel Taragarh Palace.

Chinmaya Tapovana :- 10 km. from Knagra. Situated on a hillock is the recently established 'Ashram' complex by Swami Chinmayananda, who was a great exponent of the Gita. It is a beautiful place to visit. There is also a larger than life statue of Hanuman and also a very big Shivling which can be seen from far.

Sujanpur Tira :- The historic town of Sujanpur Tira is known for its palace, now in ruins, built by Raja Sansar Chand. It is famous for the temples of Gauri Shankar, Murli Manohar and Narbadeshwar. There is the largest ground of Himachal Pradesh which is made use of as a meeting place and also for sports activities.

Kathgarh :- It is a village situated 7 kms. from Indora on the meeting point of the Beas and the Choch rivers. There is an old temple, built in Mughal style, housing 6 feet long and 5 feet round 'Shivalinga' The 'Linga' here is of its own kind not found anywhere in the world.

Nadaun :- 10 km. from Jwalamukhi and 40 km. from Kangra. A lovely place for a quiet

weekend. The Beas river which flows nearby provides excellent Mahasheer fishing. There is a temple dedicated to Shiva.

Trilokpur :- It is 41 km. from Kangra. The natural cave has attractive pillars of limestone on the floor of the cave by the percolation of water from the roof. It is something like stalagmites. The cave is dedicated to Shiva.