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The Jagti Patt temple located inside the castle

By Suchita Malik

HIMACHAL PRADESH is known for its temples, forts and holy shrines besides its hill-stations and is a favourite destination of devotees and the tourists alike. Kulu in Himachal Pradesh is rightly

Heritage

known as *Deobhumi*. This valley, besides being a favoured destination for tourists, is also known for its famous shawls and the Dasehra festival. Various kings ruled over Kulu for long periods of time and brought in their own system of governance, art, architec-

ture as well as myths and legends. A visit to the beautifully renovated castle at Naggar, a small town near Manali, provides a glimpse into Kulu's royal past.

Naggar, a small town in Kulu district, located on the bank of Beas, is a tourists' delight for its enchanting landscapes and untouched locales. The famous Roerich's Art Gallery and Roerich's residence which was converted into a state museum are also located here. But a visit to Naggar is not complete until you visit the Naggar Castle, which lies on way to the Roerich Art Gallery.

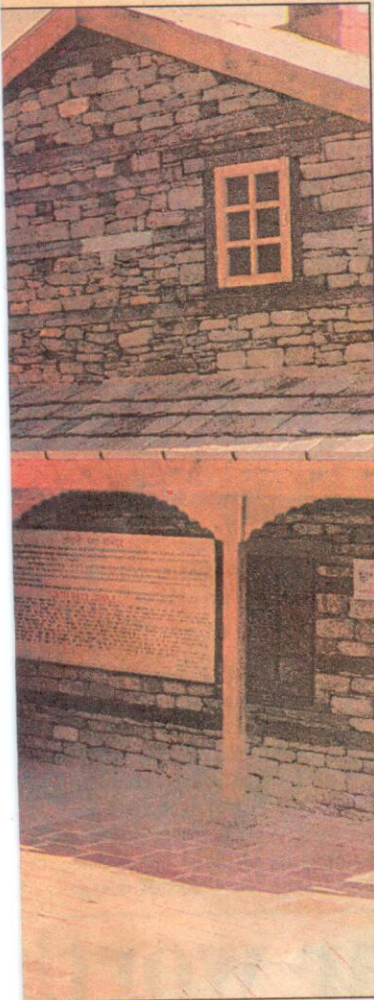
The intricate workmanship on wood at the castle is a visual delight. The beautiful entrance door with intricate

carvings leads to an open space where one gets an exquisite view of the valley from all sides.

The castle, which is state property now is run as motel

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by the Himachal Tourism Development Corporation now. Equipped with catering facilities, it has 13 rooms in all — five have common toilets and the remaining eight have independent, attached bathrooms. The room tariff, however varies from Rs 200 to Rs 1500, depending on the size, location and the facilities in the room. During peak tourist season i.e. from



Photos by the writer

April to June, the castle is nearly fully occupied.

For tourists who have experienced the crass commercialisation of Manali, the peaceful surroundings of Naggar come

labourers passed the stones from the ruins of Garhdhak (a fortified palace of Rana Bhosal located just beneath the present village of Baragaon).

The museum in the b
Minister, Himachal Pradesh on May 19, 1999.

There is a temple known as the Jagti Patt temple inside the castle. Though small, it is greatly revered by the people

astle in the hills

as a pleasant surprise.

Naggar remained the capital of Kulu for about 1460 years and the Naggar Castle was built by Raja Sidh Singh about 504 years back. Some people believe that the stones used in the huge structure were bought from Baragarh Fort situated on the other side of the river of Naggar. According to another story, a long chain of local

It is said that the castle, by virtue of the peculiarities of its construction, has withstood the massive earthquake of

1905. The castle was converted into a rest house about 100 years back and into a hotel in the year 1978. However, the Heritage unit in the castle was inaugurated by Prem Kumar Dhupal, Chief

and contains a stone slab called Jagti Patt. An interesting legend is connected with this temple. Long time ago, all gods and goddesses of the world transformed themselves into honeybees and brought this Jagti Patt from a small portion of Bhirgu-tung hill named Dram Dhog, situated near Bahang village, and placed it at Naggar. It is

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basement of the castle

believed that even now, representatives of gods and goddesses, *gurus*, *pujaris* etc. assemble at this holy place carrying the insignia of their *devi* and *devta* during times of natural calamities and to decide important matters relating to gods and goddesses.

The temple lay in a state of neglect for many years till renovation work was started a few years back. The temple was reconstructed with the help of the people of Kulu, Mandi, Lahaul districts, with the cooperation of donors. The renovation was completed on May 1, 1999.

A basement in the castle houses a small museum that showcases the culture of Kulu. Local *pattoo*, jute car-

pets, *dari*, *dhal* and *nagaras* that are used during festivals are on display here. Kulu shawls and carpets are known for their intricate and exclusive designs and patterns. Clay models showing Kulu folk dances and dressed in traditional Kulu dresses, complete with headgear, look very eye-catching. Figures of *devi-devtas*, carved in stone, are also fixed in the corridor of the museum. The Himachal Government has indeed done a commendable job in converting the castle into a motel as there could not have been a more practical way of managing and maintaining it in such good condition. Naggar and its rich heritage are a tourist's delight and should be preserved.