



JAIPUR

JAIPUR, city in northwestern India, founded in 1727 by the Kachhwaha prince (raja) and Mughal officer Sawai Jai Singh Kachhwaha (1688-1743), as his state began to slowly distance themselves from the Mughals with whom they had been close allies. Without Mughal permission Sawai Jai Singh was able to take control of considerable lands adjacent to his capital, thus bolstering his basis of power. The name of the city reflects its patron's status (in Hindi and Urdu Jaipur means City of Victory and City of Jai [Singh Kachhwaha), and it is another sign of his state's increasing distance from the Mughals. In spite of this, Sawai Jai Singh continued to perform loyal service as a high-ranking military officer who was frequently consulted for his sound opinions by both the Mughals and other Rajput princes.

The new Kachhwaha capital, Jaipur, replaced the older one of Amber which was ten kilometers to the south. Jaipur is located in eastern Rajasthan, and today it is the capital of the modern Rajasthan state. Probably inspired by the broad avenues of Isfahan and Shahjahanabad (Šāh-jahānābād, Delhi), Jaipur was a completely planned and walled city based on a grid plan possibly inspired by Indic Shastric texts (Erdman, pp. 220-21). The city's main streets were broad enough for six elephants abreast to traverse them, thus making it ideal for processions. Jai Singh and his successors would often process in a chariot or on the back of an elephant to visit temples or to celebrate festivals (Bhatnagar, pp. 339-40), giving his subjects the auspicious opportunity to behold him, a particularly Indic concept known as *darshan* that had been adopted earlier by the Mughals. The visual impact of these royal processions



was guaranteed for Sawai Jai Singh mandated uniformity in the city's architecture. Although today Jaipur's buildings are painted pink and it is often described as the Pink City, until the late 19th century the city had a uniform cream color (Roy, p. 80). Against this bland background the raja and his bejeweled entourage were the focus of attention.

Jaipur's uniformity was further enhanced by the introduction of a new temple type. Earlier temples in the area, including those at Amber, featured high towering superstructures. Beginning in about 1730 with the construction of Jaipur's most important temple, the Govinda Deva (PLATE I), a new temple type evolved that was modeled on a flat-roofed Mughal Public Audience Hall (Asher, p. 74). This flat-roofed pillared audience hall had originally been inspired by the pillared halls of Persepolis (Koch, p. 148). Over time, Sawai Jai Singh considered the god Govinda Deva to be the true ruler of Jaipur and regarded himself, the king, only as the god's prime minister (Bahura, p. 67). The new Govinda Deva temple reflected the god's new role as Jaipur's ruler. This temple then was the model for all Jaipur's temples, both Hindu and Jain, because of its simplicity. The adoption of a standard style for temple architecture further enhanced the city's uniformity ultimately enhancing the king during processions.

Sawai Jai Singh was a righteous (dharmic) ruler who supported Indic institutions, but at the same time he continued to serve the Mughal emperor loyally. He wanted to create a city which would be inhabited by a variety of peoples practicing multiple professions to ensure its economic well-being. Sawai Jai Singh issued invitations to Hindus, Muslims, Jains, and Sikhs to relocate to Jaipur to practice their professions, crafts, and skills. Among them were Muslim musicians, paper makers, cloth printers, and soldiers, Hindu and Jain scholars and businessmen, and Sikhs who specialized in enameled gold jewelry. As these people and their families came to Jaipur, land was provided for housing, and they were instructed on the required appearance to ensure a sense of homogeneity (Roy, pp. 51-52).

The palace, first erected by Sawai Jai Singh and later expanded by subsequent rajas, was located in the center of the city. Like Mughal and other Islamic palaces, the king's residence, known today as the City Palace, consisted of multiple courtyards with buildings on all four sides. Today the courtyards are paved with cement, but originally they must have been planted with gardens, as are those at Amber and at the Mughal palaces both of which served as sources of inspiration for the Jaipur palace. The complex is large and roughly



can be divided into three sections. One is the large terraced Mughal-inspired garden containing the Govinda Deva temple, the second is the administrative and residential section, and the third is an area accommodating the observatory (commonly known as Jantar Mantar, from *yantra mantra*, ‘chanting instrument’) built by Sawai Jai Singh. The most famous of the residential buildings is known as the Hawa Mahal (*Havā Maḥall*, ‘palace of air’) built in 1799 by Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh. It was built as a viewing platform for the court’s harem, so that the ladies could watch Jaipur’s many processions, and over time it has become a symbol of the city (PLATE II).

Sawai Jai Singh had a passionate interest in astronomy and, inspired by Ulugh Beg’s (1394-1449) astronomical observations and tables (*zij*), he wrote the *Zij-e Moḥammad-Šāhi* (Sharma, p. 241) and built an observatory in Jaipur with enormous instruments for observing and calculating celestial phenomena (PLATE III). Scholars are often perplexed as to his motivation in building observatories (he constructed several of them in Delhi, Jaipur, Ujjain, and Varanasi or Benares), but it must have been intimately linked to his interest and performance of Hindu ritual rites and sacrifices where precise timing of conjunctions of certain planets in the commencement of such ritual is paramount. Among other Vedic rites, Sawai Jai Singh twice performed the Ashvamedha (horse sacrifice), a Vedic ritual that could only be performed by a great king and had not been practiced since the 9th century.

Sawai Jai Singh, the founder of Jaipur, was aware of both the Persianate and Indic cultural trends and established the city in both traditions. His successors continued many of these traditions until the discontinuation of the Kachhwaha royal house in 1949. Since the middle of the 19th century the city has spread far outside its original walls, and nowadays it features notable religious, educational, health care, and cultural institutions. In the early 2000s the population of Jaipur was about 2.7 millions of people.

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