

Taj Mahal: an international treasure



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- An immense mausoleum of white marble, built in Agra between 1631 and 1648, the Taj Mahal is the jewel of Muslim art in India and one of the universally admired masterpieces of the world's heritage.

It was built by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his third wife Mumtaz Mahal.



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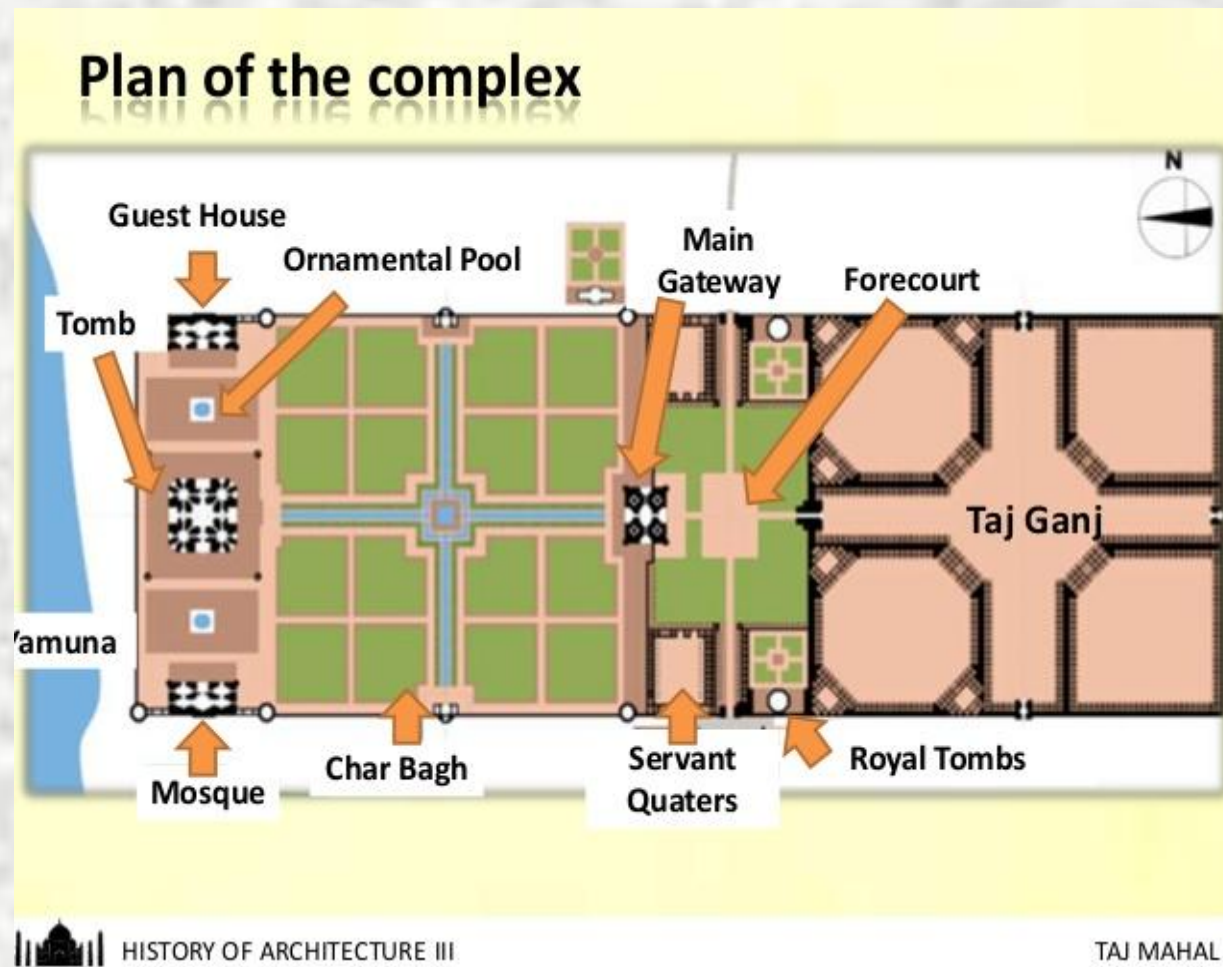
Mumtaz Mahal & Shah Jahan

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The Taj Mahal is located on the right bank of the Yamuna River in a vast Mughal garden that encompasses nearly 17 hectares, in the Agra District in Uttar Pradesh.

The construction started in 1632 and completed in 1648, with the mosque, the guest house and the main gateway on the south, the outer courtyard and its cloisters were added subsequently and completed in 1653.



Ustad-Ahmad Lahori,



also spelled as
'Ahmad Lahori', was
the main architect of
the Taj Mahal.

Construction demanded a tremendous amount of manpower



Masons, stone-cutters, inlayers, carvers, painters, calligraphers, dome builders and other artisans were requisitioned from the whole of the empire and also from the Central Asia and Iran.



About a thousand elephants handled the transport of heavy building materials.

The uniqueness of Taj Mahal lies in some remarkable innovations carried out by the planners and architects.



One such genius planning is the placing of tomb at one end of the quadripartite garden rather than in the exact centre, which added rich depth and perspective to the distant view of the monument.

The most impressive in the Taj Mahal complex next to the tomb, is **the main gate** which stands majestically in the centre of the southern wall of the forecourt.

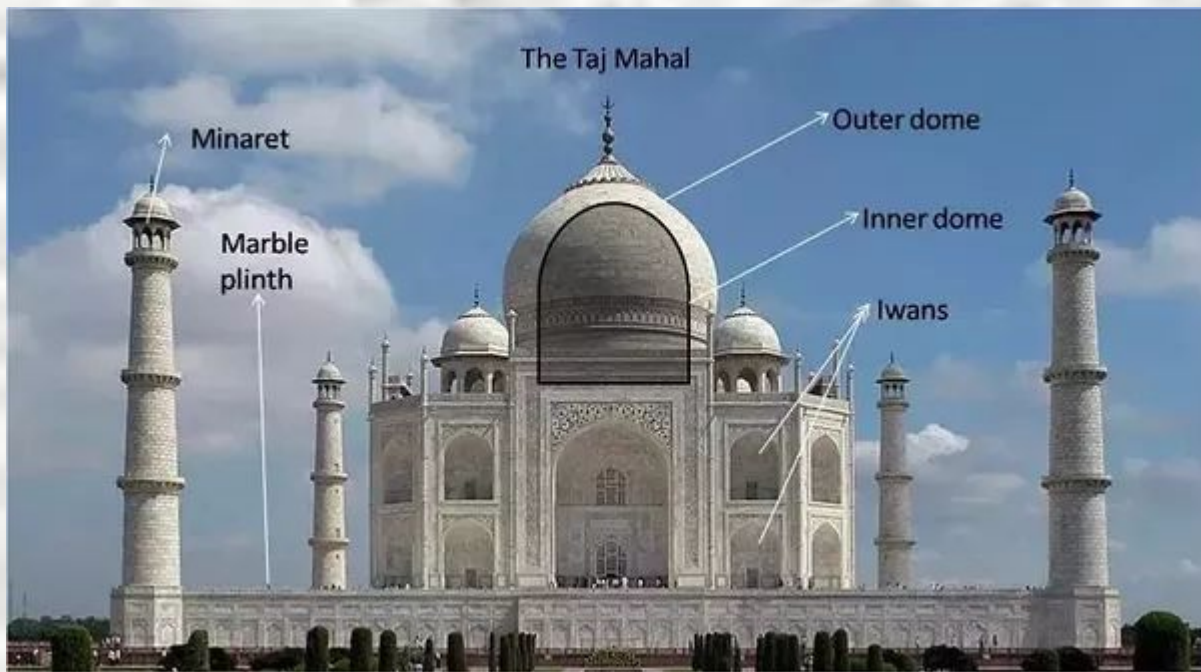


The Taj Mahal always welcomes each of its visitors with an inscription, written in beautiful handwriting, on the great gate that reads "O Soul, thou art at rest. Return to the Lord at peace with Him, and He at peace with you."

O soul,
Thou art at rest,
return to the Lord
at peace with Him
and He at peace with you

يا روح
انت الفن في بقية
العودة إلى الرب
في سلام معه
وقال في سلام مع أنت





The four free-standing minarets at the corners of the platform provide not only a kind of spatial reference to the monument but also give a three dimensional effect to the edifice.



The Taj Mahal is considered to be the greatest architectural achievement in the whole range of Indo-Islamic architecture.



The colour combination of lush green scape, reddish pathway and blue sky over it show cases the monument in ever changing tints and moods.



Thank you for your attention!

Sources

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