

Jewel in the crown: Inside the stunning Lingaraja Temple complex in Bhubaneswar

an idle mood, posing seductively to charm any passer-by. "Like a love poem written on stone," comments Susan, an art student from Canada, who is cherishing the exquisite beauty on the walls.

No other temple in the city compares with Lingaraja in sheer size and spiritual consciousness. But others, such as the 10th-century red and gold sandstone Rajarani Temple, or the elegant Mukteshwara Temple, attract equal artistic acclamation.

The city is also blessed with artefacts from ages-old Buddhist and Jain cults.

"Our ancient rulers had more tolerance for other religions than their modern counterparts," says Sukanta, as he drives us outside the city limits to Dhauli, site of the great battle of Kalinga in 261 BC, the aftermath of which has made the land so historically significant.

After victory the triumphant King Ashoka was so distressed witnessing the carnage of the

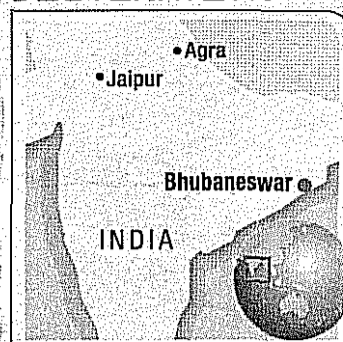
war, he threw his sword away, embraced Buddhism and then preached peace for the rest of his life. Japanese Buddhist groups built a huge Shanti Stupa (Peace Pagoda) on the site in the 1970s, which today draws visitors from all over the world.

Nearby are the twin hills of Khandagiri and Udayagiri, honeycombed with rock-cut caves built for Jain ascetics during the reign of the Kalinga emperor Kharavela in the 2nd century BC.

As the sun sets, Sukanta decides it's time to chill out. So he drops us at a restaurant where we try the local cuisine of rice, lentils, vegetables and goat meat curry, washed down with Kingfisher beer.

A Federal Government travel advisory warns: "In late August 2008 there were a number of attacks on Christian churches in parts of Orissa. A number of people died in the violence". More information at [www.smarttraveller.gov.au](http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au)

DESTINATION >>



Bhubaneswar

**Getting there:** Singapore Airlines ([www.singaporeair.com](http://www.singaporeair.com)) flies via Singapore to Kolkata, nearest international airport to Bhubaneswar (510km away). From Kolkata take a seven-hour rail trip ([www.indianrail.gov.in](http://www.indianrail.gov.in)) or a one-hour Kingfisher Airlines ([www.flyingkingfisher.com](http://www.flyingkingfisher.com)) flight to Bhubaneswar.

**Tours:** Ausindia Holidays, 1300 146 342, [www.ausindiaholidays.com.au](http://www.ausindiaholidays.com.au)

**Stay:** Trident Hilton at Nayapalli, [www.tridenthotels.com/bhubaneswar](http://www.tridenthotels.com/bhubaneswar)

**Eat:** Dalma at Sachivalaya Marg for traditional local cuisine.

**More:** India Tourism (02) 9221 9555, [www.incredibleindia.org](http://www.incredibleindia.org)

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