

perched picturesquely on a low hill-top, representing the Buddhist "Trinity" or the Three Jewels i.e. Buddhs, Dharma and Sangh, built in the traditional square ground plan with circular domes and hemispherical domes and seems to bear architectural specimen in the Sub-Continent.

At Salbon Vihara, a massive, symmetrically planned 550' square monastery of the Paharpur type, consisting of 115 living cells for monks, built around a spacious courtyard with a cruciform temple in the center, facing the only elaborate gateway complex on north, was discovered in the excavation of 1957.

Ikhityaruddin Muhammad Khilji, the redoubtable Turkoman General of Delhi Sultan Qutbuddin Aibak, conquered part of West and north Bengal from the aged Hindu King, Lakhman Sena in 1201 A.D. Thereafter, in next two hundred years the whole of old Bengal was gradually subjugated by the muslim rulers. Bengal completely broke away from Delhi tutelage and became independent under Sultan Fakiruddin Mubarak Shah in 1338 A.D. In 1342 he was ousted by Haji Shamsuddin Ilyas who set up an enlightened dynasty. Chiefly two more illustrious houses: The Hussain Shahi and the Afghan Karranis successively, ruled Bengal independently till it was again subjugated by the Mughals in 1575 A.D. During about two hundred years of independence mainly Gaur and Pandua, in west Bengal, Remained the Capital of

Muslim Bengal and as all important monuments this period are located in that region. However, with the Mughal conquest in 1575 and establishment of their Capital at Dacca (Jahangir Nagar) by Islam Khan in 1608 A.D. a new phase of development of art and architecture in the province was ushered which broke down the countries old regional isolation in these fields.

The building art of the muslim period may, therefore, be broadly classified under two phases: the Pre-Mughal and the Mughal. During the period of its isolation and independence from Delhi, strong regional elements manifested itself, while the advent of the Mughal in the province as ruling power and enforcement of political centralization, heralded a uniform provincial Mughal style in architecture.

The earliest surveying Islamic monument in Bangladesh is the traditionally known tomb of Sultan Ghiyasuddin

Azam Shah (1409 A.D.) at Sonargaon near Dacca. It is a simple black basalt monolith resting on a panelled table of the same material with keeled top, bearing ornamental motifs on carved stones, closely resembling similar decorations on the great Adina mosque at Pandua.

Chronologically a group of important monuments, erected in far south at Bagerhat bordering sundarban forest in mid-15th century by Ulugh Khan Jahan — anebulous great, colonist, — claims our special attention. His tomb is a starkly plain single domed square structure with round faced tower at four corners, — reminiscent of the simple but austere Tughlaq architecture at Delhi. The stepped cenotaph is attractively adorned with encaustic tiles of various colours and also with bold inscriptional bands recording the name and date of demise of the warrior saint.

Khan Jahan in 1459 A.D.

This great colonist is credited, by tradition, to have laid out the affluent township of Khalivtabad (Present Bagerhat) and adorned it with many magnificent mosques, tanks, bridges and roads. Among the surviving remains of his work the most imposing brick-mosque, — the largest in Bangladesh (160'x 108') is commonly known by its highly misleading name of 'Shait Gumbad' or '60-domed mosque', but in reality, it is roofed over with 77 low squat domes including 7 'Chauchala' Bengali domes in the middle row. The interior of the oblong sanctuary is divided into 7 longitudinal aisles and 11 deep bays by a forest of slender stone columns, from which spring rows of arches supporting the domes. Massive slightly tapering walls and round hollow corner towers each capped by a small dome — strongly reminiscent of somewhat similar

massive cyclopean walls tapering tower and simple but grim appearance of familiar Tughlaq monuments of Delhi — easily distinguishes it from any other monuments of the region. It has gently curved cornice, characteristics of pre-mughal monuments, broken by a small triangular pediment in the centre and 'mihrab' embellished with finely sculptured terracotta foliage and bold resettes, — are its other striking features. In this distinctive group there are many 9-domed, 10-domed and single-domed mosques scattered over a large area, even as far afield as Bakerganj, Jessore, Patuakhali, and Chittagong.

One of the most graceful monument of the pre-mughal phase is the "small Golden Mosque" (Chota Sono Masjid) at Gaur in Rajshahi, built during the reign of Sultan Hussain Shah (1493-1519 A.D.) Originally it was roofed over with 15 gilded domes including the 3 'Chauchala' domes in the middle row, from which it derives its curious name. The oblong building (82'x52') is encased in Rajmahal black stones beautifully carved with intricate floral patterns over

the eastern facade and 'mihrabs' on West wall. It has gracefully curved cornice, an ornate 'Ladies Gallery' on north and an elegant arched gateway on east.

Brick mosque at Bagha in Rajshahi, built in 1523 A.D. by Sultan Nusrat Shah is another splendid specimen of this period. Its oblong prayer-chamber (75'x42') is spanned by 10 low domes and the wall surface profusely decorated with traditional terracotta art of Bengal, representing rich foliage, grapes and resettes — especially marked on the 'mihrabs'. There is a 'Ladies Gallery' at the north-west corner of the prayer-hall and the Cornice, gracefully curved.

Jami Mosque at Kusumba in the same district, built in 1558 A.D. is another elegant monument of the period but encased in black basalt. Its oblong prayer hall (58'x42'), carrying 6 hemispherical domes above on stone pillars, has 3 intricately ornamented 'mihrabs' on west wall, depicting, in carved relief — grape plant, creepers, resettes and other

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