

# AN OUTLINE OF MUSLIM ARCHITECTURE IN EAST PAKISTAN

By

SHAMSUDDIN AHMED, M. A.

Ex-Director of Archaeology in Pakistan

The human mind has found expression more ingeniously in the Art of building than in any other artefact. The primitive man, living in jungles, hills and dales was confronted with the problem of protecting himself against heat, cold, rain and other inclemencies of nature, as well as from his fellow denizens, the wild animals. He conceived and contrived to build some sort of shelter with materials readily available at hand, such as timber, bamboo, leaves of tress, grass etc. and began to live in it. Similarly the early ethnological man, roaming in the rocks and mounds, cut out hollows and caves in them and improvised them as their habitation. In the progress of time, the potential human faculty is developed marvellously and a corresponding overall change in the art of building in its shape, size, magnitude and decoration has been effected as we visualise around us. It is to be remembered in this connection that this art of building has undergone multiple phases of invention, evolution, experiment and development, through hundreds of centuries and ages before it has assumed the present forms and stages as we see now.

For the origin of Muslim Architecture, as it may conveniently be so termed, we may look to the unostentatious sacred house, built by Prophet Muhammed in 622 A. D., at Madina, for worship of Allah. It was built of date palm leaves and its trunks, served as poles to support the roof. Sitting in this unpretentious house of worship, the holy Prophet Muhammad started preaching the sermon of plain living and high thinking; and who knows the faithful adherents sitting around him on mats were not dreaming then to erect magnificent structures rivalling the splendour of richly decorated sanctuaries and palaces of Byzantium Rome, and Sassanian empire? In this simple but dignified mosque of Madinatun-Nabi, germinated the conception

of the Muslim art of building which was gradually developed "at Kufa, at Fustat and at Jerusalem, upto the completed form of congregational mosque built at Damascus, ninety years later" as Richmond remarks, "by the Umayyad Khalifa Al-Walid (705-715 A. D.). The essential feature and requirements of such constructions consisted of =a secluded area, a sheltered sanctuary and a sheltered access to it from every side; the provision of towers from which to call the faithful to prayer and a fountain for ablution before prayer "as Richmond further enumerates. It may be mentioned in this connection that 'Mihrab' (niche in the western wall of a mosque) also counted as an essential feature of a mosque. Al-Suyuti says" At the beginning of the second century it was forbidden according to حديث (Tradition) to make use of it (Mihrab), as it was a feature of Churches". It was subsequently introduced by Umar Ibne Abdul Aziz when he rebuilt the Mosque of Madina by order of al-Walid. It is suggested that this important innovation is assigned to be of Coptic origin, who were employed for construction of that part of the mosque.

Incidentally it is to be noted here that recently, in the course of carrying archaeological excavations, at Bambhore, in Sind (West Pakistan), the ruins of a congregational mosque has been discovered, in which no Mihrab is traceable. From an Arabic Inscription found in the debris, the mosque seems to have been built sometime in the 106 A. H. = 727-28 A. C. This seems to be the oldest mosque so far unearthed in Pakistan. (Creswell, A short account of Early Muslim Architecture, p. 41-44). In secular buildings, however, the Muslims adapted the Art, by transforming and modifying the features according to their requirements and conveniences.

The doctrines of the faith preached by Muhammed filled the mind of his followers with pulsation and within one hundred years of his demise (وصال), the faithful carried the banner of Islam and subdued Syria, Palestine, Egypt, North Africa, Persia and even pressed their arms westwards to Spain and eastward to the Indus Valley. Thus became "masters of an empire greater than that of Rome at the zenith of its power". The Arabs had little or no genius for the art of building and in whatever conquered country they established themselves, they "invariably adapted to their own needs the indigenous architecture" as they found prevailing there; but the local styles which they came in contact with in different provinces

and territories were "as numerous and distinct one from another as the peoples themselves". They studied the existing various local forms, their characteristics and evolved a uniform principle now pervading throughout the entire school of building Art, which we may conveniently call the Muslim Art of Architecture, for giving expression to their own ideals.

With the coming of Muslims in this province, the art of building entered a new epoch. Although saturated deeply with the indigenous traditions and considerably conditioned by the local climate and its soil, the Muslims introduced sweeping changes in style and method of construction of their buildings. We are fortunate to study more closely and accurately the evolution of this new phase of architecture from the existing monuments scattered throughout the province; particularly those which adorned their metropolis at Gaur and Pandua and still later, at Dacca with some variation in important outlying colonies such as Bagerhat.

The pre-Muslim and Muslim architecture of Bengal, as elsewhere in this sub-continent, differ basically on technical principle; one was Trabeate, consisting of pillars and posts as principal architectural members; while the other, Arcuate, consisting of liberal use of arches, expansive domes and vaults. The pre-Muslim builders did not properly understand the principle of True arch based on radiating voussoirs and its immense utility in bridging a gap and as such all their small ornamental arches or niches are roofed over by overlapping courses of stones or bricks - a crude system technically known as Corbel. It is strange that while the Romans in 1st century A. D. were extensively using true arches in their magnificent buildings, the Muslims introduced this very important technical innovations for the first time in and about 1000 A. D. in this sub-continent. This was possible largely due to the use of new binding material, the lime-surki mortar which replaced the pre-Muslim mud. It is not that the pre-Muslim builders did not know the use of lime-surki concrete as it is testified by discovery of lime-concrete floor etc. in the excavation of Mahasthan, Paharpur and Mainamati, but they failed to realise its immense utility. The Muslims also used lime as plaster coating of the exterior of the buildings in order to make these water-tight. Particularly during the Mughal period lime plaster was widely used on the surface of their walls, superseding the ornate plastic modelling in terracotta or



stone of the Pre-Mughal traditions. Again the Muslims introduced glazed tile decoration on the surface of their buildings from 15th century. Curiously however, this practice went out of fashion after a century in Bengal. These encaustic tiles were both of none-colour as well as polychrome, and often variegated with brilliant floral designs. The abundant use of these tiles leads us to conclude that these tiles were manufactured locally.

The tradition of terracotta ornamentation on surface of buildings is pre-muslim in origin and continued throughout the Pre-Mughal period. The brick red surface of these monuments against the background of surrounding greenery presents a very pleasing effect and effectively breaks the monotony. With the coming of the Mughals a fundamental change in the treatment of surface decoration took place. The plaster replaced the terracotta. This general observation, however, does not mean that the indigenous tradition died out totally, as few monuments built during the Mughal period testify, such as Atia Mosque (Mymensingh dated 1609 A. D) and Kherua Mosque (Sherpur, Bogra dated 1582 A. D.). Such exceptions survived late into the Mughal period. The indigenous craftsmen imbued deep in this tradition however, diverted their skill in terracotta plastic modelling on numerous Hindu temples erected as late as 18th century A. D. The details of stone carving on few surviving stone edifices erected during the muslim rule in Bengal, clearly betray their indebtedness to terracotta ornamentation such as we find on Chhota Sona Mosque at Gaur (1493-1519 A. D.), Bagha and Kusumba Mosques (1558 A. D.) in Rajshahi district. The stone work however came to an end with the advent of the Mughals and even the stone columns were discarded from their buildings. Only exceptions noticeable being in the mausoleum of Bibi Pari in Dacca (1684 A. D.) white marble and black stone have been used to decorate its interior. Incidentally it is also to be noted that strangely the roof of the above monument though built at a time when the Mughal building art attained its full maturity, is spanned by overlapping courses of huge black basalts on the principle of corbel.

Another notable difference between the pre-Mughal muslim monuments and Mughal buildings is the treatment of central entrance. No emphasis or prominence was given to the central entrance in pre-Mughal monuments whereas in all the Mughal monuments we find expansive gateways, framed usually within a projected rec-

tangular fronton. A screened off ladies gallery on an elevated corner is often noticeable in Pre-Mughal stone Mosque such as the Chhota Sona Mosque and the Kusumba Mosque (Rajshahi District), but their feature is totally abandoned in all the mosques erected during the Mughal rule in this Province.

It would now be necessary to examine the above general observation of the new style of architecture introduced by the Muslims against the background of known history and surviving monuments. This architectural activity, covering a period of little over 500 years of Muslim rule of this Province, may be classified under three distinct phases. Firstly, from the date of its conquest by Ikhtiaruddin Muhammad bin-Bakhtiar Khilji, in 1202 A. D. upto 1338 A. D. when Bengal was governed by the representative of the central Government at Delhi; secondly from the period of its assumption of independence in 1338 A.D. by the rulers of Bengal, till 1575 A. D. and the third phase corresponds with 1575 A. D. when the province passed into the hands of the Mughal rulers, and lasted till 1707 A. D.

#### *First Phase*

The early Muslim conquerors of Bengal who ruled for a period of little over a century and a quarter, being busily pre-occupied in consolidating their newly acquired territory, had seldom any opportunity to adorn their seats of government either at Lakhnauti or Devikot, with buildings of any consequence. The remains of few of them however, have survived the ravages of time, located in outlying areas such as Satgaon, Tribeni and Pandua (all now in West Bengal, India). The chief characteristic of these and subsequent monuments in Bengal are described by Sir John Marshall as "A peculiar form of curvilinear roof, commonly known as Bengali; square brick pillars of stunted proportions as well as more slender ones of stone; and curved or moulded surface decorations of almost ultra-refined elegance". The two specimens of early muslim architecture can be seen at Tribeni where stands a roofless tomb and a mosque of Zafar Khan Ghazi who is credited to have conquered southern Bengal in 1288 A. D. The tomb is built out of the materials of a Krishna Temple that existed previously on that spot; while the mosque, though of subsequent date, was so extensively renovated during the reign of Alauddin Husain Shah (1493-1519 A. D.) that it has lost its original character.

The Firoza Minar and a Jami Mosque at Pandua, believed to be erected by a muslim saint known as Shah Saifuddin, a nephew of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, affords us clue to the existing architectural style of the early Sultans of Delhi. The tower rises to a height of about 84 feet in 5 storeys, the lower 3 storeys being 12 sided and the upper 3 storeys circular in plan and tapers to the top which originally was covered by a dome. This stupendous mass of masonry, presumably built in imitation of the Qutb Minar at Delhi, appears rather disproportionate and unsymmetrical in relation to its diameter. The walls and arches of the spacious Jami Mosque on the other hand are of brick while the pillars are of black basalt evidently stripped from the surrounding earlier Hindu Temples. This magnificent mosque is supposed to have served as a prototype on the model of which the famous multi-domed Adina Mosque at Pandua, was built.

*Second Phase :* It is the wonderful mass of ruins, stretching along the old bank of the Ganges for nearly 20 miles from Pandua southwards, in which stand countless derelict tombs, mosques, fortress, tanks and towers in imposing array, half buried in rank vegetation that the glory of the Independent Sultans of Bengal can rightly be stranded. Unfortunately, most of the monuments now lie in the Indian dominion, but for a systematic study of architecture of this phase, it would be necessary to survey them as a component whole. The magnificent Adina Mosque, built by Sikandar Shah (1358-89 A. D.) is perhaps the most ambitious edifice of its kind ever attempted in Eastern Indo-Pak sub-continent. In plan it is a quadrangle measuring 507 1/2 feet long and 385 1/2 feet wide, bounded on all 4 sides by 88 arched screens, each surmounted by a dome. The cloisters are divided into 375 bay, 5 deep in the western and 3 deep on the other sides; while the nave consist of a raised platform, apparently a Royal gallery known as Badshah-ka-Takht. It is built in the nortern wing of the prayer chamber, close to the pulpit and stand on very short square, but ponderous pillars of abnormal thickness, which are capped by massive bracket capitals. The lower half of the main shrine as well as the whole of Badshah-ka-Takh, are built of black basalt and sand stone evidently queried from some ancient Hindu Temples as testified by some sculptural stones, improvised in the mihrab. The whole of the inner western wall is daintily decorated with floral scrolls and flowing arabesque of geometric tracteries of surpassing elegance. The



roof of this gigantic mosque was originally covered with squat domes of which only those over the Royal Gallery survive at present.

The Eklakhi Tomb, believed to be erected on the body remains of Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah (Jadu), the proselyte son of Raja Ganesh, who is supposed to have usurped the sovereign power between 1409 and 1438 A. D. from the Ilias Shahi family, is situated about a mile to the south-west of the great Adina Mosque and undoubtedly marks an important stage of evolution in the art of building of the early 15th century which served as a prototype on the model of which several structures were designed in subsequent years. The mausoleum is one of the finest specimen of muslim architecture in Bengal; the most interesting characteristics being its gently curving cornice, octagonal turret at each 4 corners and the use of single hemispherical dome, instead of many, which is carried on squinch arches and supported on stunted thick pillars. It is a simple brick fabric of refined conception with sparse use of black stone slabs. In exterior plan, the mausoleum is almost a square, measuring 788'-6" × 74'-6" but internally changes into an octagon, which is effected by filling the corner core with solid brick-work. As a result the walls are transformed into exceptional massiveness of 13 feet thickness. The outer surface of the tomb is relieved with moulded terracotta panels and curved friezes of bricks. One striking feature displayed for the first time in the history of Bengal architecture, is the use of glazed tiles in the overhanging cornices of the monument.

Dakhil Gateway, believed to have been built by Barbak Shah (1459-74 A. D.), the Tantipara, Darasbari and Lotton Masjid, ascribed to his son Yusuf Shah (1474-81 A. D.) and the Gunmant Mosque, erected probably a few years later, are some of the examples of numerous architectural activities which characterised the "restored" Ilias Shahi Dynasty after the expulsion of the scions of Raja Ganesh in 1438 A. D. Dakhil Darwaja is a superb example of what can be achieved in brick and terracotta. This magnificent edifice rises to height of about 60 feet and pierced by an elegant central arched passage, flanked by guard rooms on either side and provided with four corner turrets tapering in 5 storeys, once crowned by a dome each over them. It is adorned with sunk panels and other motifs of Hindu origin, but its chief interest lies in the surprising boldness

of design and ingeneous skill with which its facade has been diversified by alternate effects of light and shade.

Besides, other monuments of lesser importance the Saithgumbad Mosque and tomb of Khan Jahan Ali at Bagerhat, both dating from about 1459 A. D. and numerous other buildings of the same period scattered in its neighbourhood, clearly marks out as a distinct class by themselves for their striking architectural peculiarities and may be conveniently grouped together under the title of Khan Jahan Ali style. The style is conspicuous for its highly battered circular corner turrets and severe plainness in design and decoration which are strongly renumiscent of Tughlaq architecture. All these examples have. however, a curvature of the cornice. The Saithgumbad Mosque is an oblong brick structure roofed over with 77 squat inverted cup-shaped domes of which the central row consists of chauchala hut style arranged in 11 rows of 7 each, and supported on 66 slender stone columns. It is the biggest muslim mosque in East Pakistan. Its exterior and inside surface are very sparcely relieved with terracotta decoration, especially on the spnadrels of arches, which consists of floral arabesque or rosettes. The use of enamelled tiles of variegated colour and designs, appear to have been also used sporadically in this group of buildings.

We observe a noteworthy change in the building art of Bengal in the Gunmant Mosque at Gaur, where although glazed tile work was also used, the coloured decoration was relegated to a subordinate position by the relief work on stone. In grand plan this mosque is almost similar to the famous Adina, although in a much smaller scale. The chief features of this oblong mosque, measuring 157'-0 × 59'-0 and crowned with nine semicircular domes, is its octagonal corner turrets usual curved battlements over the cornice, profusion of terracotta and stone ornamentation for surface relief, use of encaustic tiles and stone encasement of walls. These black stones were quaried from distant Rajmahal Hills and Balasore.

The scions of the Husain Shahi Dynasty (1493-1552 A. D.) were also great builders. They are the authors of innumerable new edifices, tombs and mosques, among which Chhota Sona Masjid at Gaur (in East Pakistan), built by Wali Muhammad during the reign of Husain Shah; a mosque at Bagha in Rajshahi District dating



1523 A. D. and Kusumba Mosque in the same district; the Bara Sona Masjid at Gaur (in India), completed by Nusrat Shah VI in 1526 A. D. and the Qadam Rasul Mosque erected by the same king in 1530 A. D. - stand at prominent. Among these the Bagha and the Qadam Rasul Mosques are constructed of brick and terracotta; while the Chhota and Bara Sona Masjids are constructed of brick-core, faced with stone, both inside and out. Within the same enclosure of the Qadam-i-Rasul building, stand a very interesting brick built tomb of certain Fath Khan (C. 1660 A. D.) supposed to be a son of Dilir Khan, which deserves here more than a mere passing mention. It consists of an oblong single room (30'-8" × 21'-5") plastered all over but its roof is made up of two sloping sides making a curved ridge on top and triangular gable ends on north and south sides. The high central ridge is crowned with five protuberances, as usually noticeable in thatched huts. The eaves are also curved in the shape of a bow in imitation of the flexible bamboo eaves of the thatch huts, and exactly resembles the "dochala" hut roof so common in Bengal villages. Both Chhota and Bara Masjids derive their name "golden" from the original gilding of their domes with gold. The Chhota Sona Masjid, the older of the two, though much smaller than the other is more elaborate of the two. It is provided with 5 arched entrances in front and the mouldings of its curved cornice is duplicated and enriched, while the monotony of the semi-circular squat domes is broken by the insertion of a curvilinear chauchala roof in the middle. The bareness of the stone wall is relieved by a wealth of foliated carvings in low relief.

*Third Phase:* The phase roughly corresponds with the annexation of the province by Akbar the Great Mughal in 1575 A. D. The chief characteristics of this phase consist of introducing, imposing bulbous domes, wide and massive sunken arched openings in the facade with emphasis on the central entrance, tapering octagonal corner turrets and the capitals of the shafts invariably fashioned in the form of a bracket support.

The congregational mosque Chatmohar (Pabna) seems to be the earliest building in Bengal, built in the reign of Akbar (1582 A. D.) by Ma'sum Khan Ka=buli, a formidable Afghan rebel leader. The sanctuary now stands in a dilapidated condition which baffles any proper appraisal of its architecture. It appears from its extent

ruins that there were 3 arched entrances on the east of which the central one is slightly prominent and higher than the flanking ones. The central mihrab is richly ornamented, its arch being engrailed below floreate ornament in the pre-Mughal style. Although chronologically it is later than the advent of the Mughals, it is essentially a non-Mughal work, except the arrangement of three front arches anticipating the Persian fashion introduced by the Mughals. The monument, in fact, shows clearly the transitional phase between the pre-Mughal and Mughal architecture. Here we find the beginning of 3 bay facade which became common in later Mughal examples. Each bay is covered by hemispherical domes resting on side walls and arches springing directly from side walls, totally discarding pillars supports for the springing of the dome.

Of the same transitional period belongs the Kherua mosque at Sherpur (Bogra), erected in the same year (1582 A. D.) by one Murad Khan Qaqshal. This brick built unplastered 3 domed mosque, is rectangular in ground plan (57'-0 × 25'-0) having 4 octagonal corner turrets, divided up horizontally with brick ornamental mouldings and provided with curved cornice on all four sides. There are 3 equal arched openings on the eastern face prumed within a rectangular panel, and one each on north and south. Internally, the mosque is divided into 3 square bays surmounted by 3 dominant hemispherical domes carried on typical Bengali corbelled-brick pendentives. Corresponding to the 3 feet entrances on east, the interior western wall is relieved with 3 mihrabs, likewise framed within rectangular brick panels with a battlemented cresting above the central mihrab. The spandrels of the arches are tastefully ornamented with terracotta floral designs and rosettes.

Dacca and its suburbs are dotted with the remains of a number of buildings attributable to the reign of Aurangzeb, notable among which are an Idrakpur Fort, Hajiganj Fort, Sonakanda Fort, Lalbagh Fort, Bibi Pari's Tomb and Khan Muhammad Mirdha's Mosque.

Idrakpur Fort is a brick-built fort, situated about 15 miles south-east of Dacca, at Munshiganj on a dried up bank of the Icha-mati river, constructed in 1660 A. D. by Mir Jumba, the Mughal Governor of the Province, as an outpost to Dacca against the Mugh, and Portuguese pirates. It consists of an oblong enclosure measuring 270'-0 × 240'-0 with a featureless gate on the northern side and a

circular bastion at each corner. The bastions are solid upto rampart level, above which the parapet is profusely pierced for musketry. A noteworthy feature of this fort is a huge circular solid platform or drum with a diameter of 108 feet and a height of more than 30 feet, negotiable by a flight of steps across the eastern wall of the main enclosure and itself situated on an annexe, 130 feet wide. A narrow stair-case admits to the annexe from the summit of the platform. The huge circular drum was evidently intended to mount cannon of considerable calibre and serve as a watch-tower as well. This may be of Portuguese inspiration as it is known that at that time many Portuguese adventurers were admitted into the Mughal service.

Examples of a couple of similar outposts with identical artillery platform: Of the same period can be seen at Otajiganj and Sonakanda forts in Narayanganj, situated on either banks of the Sitalakhya river. The former is a hexagonal enclosure with circular bastions at the corners with loopholes for musketry and provided with a stupendous square gun-platform towards the river, whereas the latter or the Sonakanda Fort is an oblong enclosure and bear all other features of the series in common. It is provided with a huge circular gun-platform towards the river. This group of river forts afford us an interesting feature of the 17th century courtguard works.

The Lalbagh Fort monuments: Construction of this group of notable monuments at Dacca was commenced in 1698 A. D. by Prince Mohammad Azam, the 3rd son of Aurangzeb but could never be completed by him or his successor Nawab Shaista Khan. It consists of a high brick rampart, now standing only on south and west with intervening semi-octagonal bastions at regular interval and octagonal towers on each corner, and provided with imposing gateways, rising in 3 storey. The south gate represents the magnificently planned true specimen of a Imperial Mughal style that developed in Bengal. The majestic arched gateway leads into a square domed hall the ceiling of which is ornamented with geometric pattern on plaster and flanked on either side with subsidiary guards rooms. A lofty archway on the top of the second storey is balanced on either side with deep semi-octagonal alcove below an oriel window in two stages, capped by a cupola each on their top. The lofty archways on two storey are emphasized by slender octagonal mineals on either sides.



On the top of 4 corners originally 4 pillared kiosks gracefully broke the skyline.

Occupying somewhat the centre of the Lalbagh Fort, is the unique mausoleum of Bibi Pari or Iran Dukht, the alleged daughter of Shaista Khan. Three kinds of stones - the black basalt, grey sand stone, and white marble have been used in its embellishment and consists of a central square tomb chamber where a sparsely decorated plain marble sarcophagus is placed, 4 side rooms and 4 square corner chambers. The walls of the central tomb chamber are veneered with white marble, while those of the corner ones were decorated with enamelled tiles of dark blue, orange, green and crimson colours on a yellow ground. The roof of the chambers are curiously built in old Hindu fashion of over-lapping courses of stone blocks. The central chamber is likewise spanned with an octagonal corbelled vault, which is covered on the outside by a false copper dome.

Within the Lalbagh Fort premise there is also a small three-domed mosque elegant for its ribbed treatment of domes and notable for balanced proportion of the component parts, but otherwise built in the typical Imperial Mughal style which developed in this province. This was built by Prince Azam in 1678 A. D. The other interesting structure within the Fort is a two storeyed imposing structure, known as the Audience Hall and Hammam complex. It consists of a Central Hall covered by typical Bengali hut-shaped roof having a curved central ridge with two sloping roof, and flanked by two square side chambers. A complex of domical square chambers are attached on the western side of the main building on the ground floor meant for a Hammam or bathing chamber which were fitted originally with earthen pipes through the walls for supply of hot and cold waters to the reservoir in these chambers. In general plan an elaborate arrangement, it shows little variations with others of their series such as we find in the Summer House of Shah Shuja at Gaur, Isvaripur (Khulna) or Jinzira Palace ruins near Dacca across the Buriganga. Unfortunately the building is extensively renovated in recent years by the British to suit their need that it is difficult to assess its architectural merit.

*Katra* : (Bazar) The Chhota and Bara Katras at Dacca are an interesting group of buildings built on the pattern of caravan serais common in Northern India. More important and imposing of the

two, the Bara Katra is now located on the southern side of the Chawk-bazar heavily encroached by modern hutments around with its major portion completely dismantled by local peoples. According to inscriptions originally attached to it was erected in 1644 A. D. as a residence of Shah Shurja but subsequently betowed to its builder Abul Quadim in 1644 A. D. Originally, the Bara Katra consisted of a quadrangular enclosure with living rooms on all 4 sides and provided with an imposing gateway one each on North and South. The northern wing together with the greater part of the eastern enclosure are now competely demolished to accommodate modern houses and shops. The southern wing originally standing close to the river Buriganga presents even in its highly encumbered condition, a magnificent river frontage of 223 feet and consists of a lofty central gateway which rises in 3 storeys and set in projected rectangular fronton and flanked on either side with prominently projecting octagonal towers. The main gate chamber is spanned by a dome decorated with plaster network. From its ruins it is quite clear that the edifce was planned on a grand scale and embellished with all features of the Imperial Mughal style.

Husaini Dalan, traditionally built during the time of Shah Shuja, is another very interesting and grand monument of Dacca. In its present highly altered form, however, it presents a very modern look but still some older features survive. Primarily it is intended to hold meetings of the Shia community on religious occasions. It consists of two spacious halls, placed back to back and other subsidiary halls in two storeys probably meant for the ladies. The roof of the entire structure collapsed in 1897 by an earthquake and was rebuilt when a verandah was added to the southern side facing a tank. The whole building stands on a revised plinth resting on a series of arches and presents a wide imposing frontage, having 4 doric columns covered in plain which supports the present flat roof of the verandah.

The last of the series of Mughal monuments in sequence is the mosque of Khan Muhammad Mirdha in Atosh Khana locality of Dacca. It is a plain brick structure spanned by 3 hemispherical domes and constructed on a terracotta platform, measuring 125'-0 × 100'-0 and about 16 feet high above the ground level. The basement of the platform, below the actual prayer chamber, containing 30 cells, were obviously intended to accomodate devotees or a madrasah.

It was built, according an inscription, by one Quadi Ibadullah in 1706 A. D.

An interesting group of buildings located at Gaur (in East Pakistan) and associated with the name of Shah Niamatullah Wali, a reputed saint of Shah Shuja's time, deserves mention in brief. This group consists of a mausoleum, a three-domed Jami Mosque and a Tahkhana or Summer Resort. The Tahkhana is said to have been built by Prince Shuja for his 'murshid' during his Viceroyalty in Bengal. It is a two-storeyed building constructed in trabeated style, measuring 116 feet by 38 feet and flanked by a corridor on each of the front and back rooms. This is a single building in Gaur in which wooden beams are re-inforced in concrete work. It is also provided with an elaborate system of Hammam for which channels of earthen water pipes are embedded through the walls in order to feed the water reservoir. Otherwise it is plain plastered brick-work with usual decoration of the late Mughal period.

Although built in the decadent Mughal style, the five domed mosque at Murshid Quli Khan at Begumbazar, Dacca, evinces some interesting features (built between 1700-1704). It stands on a raised platform like some other 18th century mosques at Dacca, which contains a series of vaulted chambers. A 'dochala' hut-roof of the Bengali type room is attached to the mosque on north actually meant for the residence of the imam and on the east there is an old stepped well or "Badli", only one of its kind in Bengal, although commonly met with in Northern India specially during the Sher Shahi regime. The domes of the mosque rest on ornamental drums and are crowned with lotus finial.