

HISTORICAL PLACES IN HANSI

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Abstract: The state of Haryana has not only witnessed the historic Mahabharata war but has also been the place of many ancient civilizations and cultures. Many archaeological and historical sites have been discovered in this state. Many archaeological, historical, semi-historical and medieval sites reflect the glorious history of Haryana. Apart from archaeological sites, many medieval forts, palaces, monuments, temples, mosques, buildings etc. are located in Haryana. Hansi, located in Hisar district of Haryana state, has many medieval monuments which reflect the historical heritage of Haryana. These are also very important for the educational and tourism point of view.

Keyword: Haryana, historic, place, mosques, medieval, monument, temple, Hansi, heritage, tourism, Qila, Qutb, inscription, fort, Sufi, saint.

Introduction: Hansi is a tehsil of Hisar district in Haryana state. The town of Hansi is situated at a distance of about 26 kms. east of Hisar city and 138 kms. west of Delhi on Delhi - Sirsa National Highway. It is also connected by rail on Delhi- Rewari- Bathinda railway line. The distance of Hansi from Rewari and Bathinda is 122 and 186 kms. respectively. The nomenclature of Hansi has been variously explained in local traditions; a tradition still prevalent among the people of the town ascribes that at the time of construction of the fort of Hansi, its wall collapsed again and again. An astronomer was consulted who advised human sacrifice. A man from nearby village Pali, named Åssä, offered himself for the purpose. He was cemented alive in the walls of the fort and the ruler of the region gave him full royal honor for his supreme sacrifice. The fort-town when constructed was named after him. This version is supported by another folk-tale that Assi Assä Jäta kō Killa Pithora Rai kã. It recognizes the contribution of Åssä Jäta to the foundation of the town while the construction of the fort it attributes to Prithviraja. According to Cunningham Asa the Jäta, conquered and proclaimed himself king of citadel. Calling it after his name Āsā, which, by the dialectic modifications of succeeding ages, has become Hansi. A third popular tradition connects the name Hansi with laughter or smile, which came over the face of Amba, an ailing daughter of king Anangapala,

who after coming to the place recouped her vigor and vitality The king thus named the city as Hansi (laughter). According to Dwivedi the town of Hansi was founded by Drupada, son of King Anangapala Tomara, on the periphery of the Tomara territory while in the contemporary inscriptions. The Hansi and Bijolia inscriptions of the Chauhana dynasty of the years 1164 AD and 1168 AD respectively mention it as Asika. The local people still call it 'Ansi' not Hansi, which latter appellation was given to the town by the Muslim writers.

Places of Interest:

Hansi is the only place or town which can be included in the places of interest of Hansi. The town bears impressions of the rule of Prithviraja Chauhan, the invasions of Mahmud Ghazni and Muhammad Ghori, the reign of the Sultans, the Mughals and the presence of the British under James Skinner. The stay of famous Sufi saint Bābā Farid has given the town of fascinating identity. From the view point of ancient monuments, no structural evidence of ancient architecture was found in this region. But a few monuments of medieval times in good state of preservation are available in Hansi town which are described below in two groups.

(A) The Qila Group**(B) Char Qutbs Group****A. The Qila Group****1. Fort:**

The fort of Hansi is reputed to be one of the most impregnable forts. It lies to the north of the town on a huge mound. Rai Pithora is locally said to have been the founder of the fort, but although he probably made an important place and greatly strengthened it for making it an important military strong-hold. It was certainly in existence long prior to his time. The fort was almost entirely dismantled after the mutiny, and its materials sold.

2. Barsi Gate:

The majestic Barsi gate standing amidst the bazaar of Hansi town was the main entrance to the ancient fort of Hansi. Even today, it is an important gate of the other defense wall of the Hansi fort. A Persian epigraph inscribed above the doorway records the date of its construction which corresponds to the year 1304-1305 A.D. This epigraph can be ascribed to the reign of Ala-ud-din Khilji when he ascended the throne in 1296 A.D. The whole north-west India was in a state of anarchy. The Mongol inroads had largely devastated the Punjab. He repaired and strengthened the forts in the north-west and put up three sufficient garrisons. This gate of course, is a material proof. It is a fine example of fort architecture. Its protruding round

bastions, big rectangular forms, bedecked with simple paneling, contrasted with encaustic tile-work in the spandrels, give the effect of both strength and beauty.

3. The Gateway Complex of the Citadel:

Standing on the roof top of the Barsi gate, one can see looking towards the north, at the foot of the imposing mound, another gateway complex in imperfect alignment with the former. The latter is provided in the southern wall of the inner circumambulation, giving access to the citadel, which is now in ruins. The tottering walls of the defense, thrown round the mound, can still be seen at places in the periphery. There is a decaying structure, outside the wall, near the gateway. This was probably a stable cum-garrison post. While going round the whole complex, one cannot fail to notice that the material of the old Hindu palaces and temples were freely made use of in its construction. There are two fine sculptured friezes, depicting a row of swans in different poses, now fixed one each in the gateway complex and the other in the Bärädan.

4. Baradari:

In the centre of the fort mound are ruins of a bärädari, a long hall supported by pillars and a large closed tank. Originally this might have been a pillared hall of early Muslim architecture, in which the building material of old Hindu monuments was freely used. One of the two aforesaid beautiful friezes, depicting the identical theme of swans in different natural poses, may also be seen built in there. All these might once have formed part of a continuous decorative scheme of a palace or a temple in the fort. Sometime during the later periods, perhaps during Colonel Skinner's rule, the fort was converted into a horse stable, which perhaps necessitated the partition walls inside the pillared bays.

5. Sayyid Shah-ki-Khangah and the Associated Structures:

At the northern end of the extensive mound, there is a group of structures, popularly known as Khangah, after a revered mausoleum of Wali Hazrat Sayyid Shah Niyami Ullah, who died here fighting during the campaign of Muhammad Ghori in 1191-92 A.D. He successfully led the Muslim forces to conquer the fort, though he lost his life fighting on that spot. In course of time it became a sacred place for the Hindus as well. A fair is held every March, at which much charity is dispensed. There are two inscriptions in Arabic engraved on slabs or incised in plaster. It is clear from these epigraphs as well as the architecture that it underwent successive changes in the past. Today it is a small complex of monuments bearing a deserted look. There are two mosques alongside this tomb inside an enclosure collectively called Rauzah. The bigger

mosque may be medieval while the smaller one seems to be of a comparatively later date. Carved pillars are architectural members of Hindu origins are used in construction. To the west of this Rauzah there are some beautifully carved stone pillars and lintels now used in a deserted well, which are almost added from view by thick jungle.

B. Char Qutbs Group

The second group popularly known as Char Qutbs group of medieval monuments is located to the west of the town and represents one of the important centers of the Chistia order of Sufism in Haryana, these are:

1. The Four Qutbs:

The mosque and tomb of the Char Qutbs are an interesting relic situated on the west side of the town. The shrine is more than 800 years old and is a resting place of four divines of the Chistia order of Sufism, Sheikh Jamal-ud-din Ahmad Hanswi, Sheikh Burhan-ud-din Sufi, Sheikh Qutb-ud din Munawar and Sheikh Noor-ud-din. Jamal-ud-din Munawar was the son of Hamid-ud-din and grandson of Nimatuallah. On his father's death, he was given the administration of Hansi. But he preferred religious devotion. He became the disciple of Baba Shaikh Farid Ganj-i-Shakar of Pak Pattan. The Tomb, which houses the mortal remains of these Qutbs and some of their family members, is a domed structure of no particular architectural significance, although its historical and religious value is undeniable. The old monument seems to have been subjected to many overall changes. This tomb is joined to a small mosque on the west. It is said that it was here that Baba Farid used to meditate and offer prayers. Outside this mosque the local Mullah points to a seat having a flight of three steps, from where he asserts, the saint delivered his sermons.

2. The Tomb of Mir-Tajarah:

The most beautiful tomb in the complex is that of Mir-Tajarah or former General of Chief Surveyor of Sultan Hamid-ud-din. This Mir-All, or Alam (who is also called the Murid, or disciple of Qutb Jamal-ud-din) is said to have originally built this tomb for his teacher. But the latter is said to have remarked: who knows for whom it is intended incidentally, the former died earlier and was himself buried there.

3. The Mosque of Tughlaq:

The most imposing edifice is the larger mosque in the northern enclosure. It was originally constructed by Feroz Shah Tughlaq, although according to legend, it was constructed out of the money offered by Muhammed Tughlaq to the last Qutb.

4. The Chhatri:

The square canopied tomb (locally called Chhatri of Baba Farid) is 43 4/2" in circuit and about 10' 10" across, each face being also square, and 17 10/2" high. Four carved sandstone pillars support the enameled canopy and the vault contains two graves, said to be the oldest in Hansi.

5. Colum mated Structure:

The oblong canopied building measures 39' 3" long, 8' 7/2" broad, and 17' high. The canopy rests upon ten ornamented columns, and the building contains eight graves of Qutb-Jamal-ud-din's descendants, two of whom were themselves Qutbs.

6. Tombs of James Skinner and his Wife:

To the north-west of the tomb of Ali Tajarah stand two beautiful small square tombs hiding the bodily remains of Colonel James Skinner and his wife. The cut-plaster decoration is tastefully executed and bespeaks of the continued craft tradition coming down from the Mughals.

Conclusion : Undoubtedly, Haryana is full of many ancient and medieval monuments. Hansi region has been a witness to ancient and medieval kingdoms. The monuments like Fort, Barsi Gate , Gateway complex of citadel , Baradari, Sayyad Sah ki Khangah, The four Qutub, The Tomb of Mir Tajarah, The Mosque of Tughlaq, The Chhatri, Tombs of James Skinner and his wife etc. found here depict the rich history of ancient, medieval and British colonial times.

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