

Historical Milieu of Malkā Hāns in Punjāb

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ABSTRACT:

The region of Punjab has the most prevalent historical contextual of Pakistan. This province shows close connotation between history and identity. The diversity of Punjab has a resilient cultural antiquity which has come up with the significances of cultural combination of various tribes particularly Hāns that is acknowledged as great tribe. Malkā Hāns was a territory of Hāns tribe, a small village nearby Pākpattan. it is immensely rich in its inheritance, Pākpattan is a renowned district of province Punjab and it is also famed as the city of saints. It is affluent in its cultural and spiritual values along with its architectural legacy. Before the creation of Pakistan, Sikhs and Hindus were living in large numbers in Malkā Hāns. There are many temples and samādhīs which identified the strength of Sikhs and Hindus at that time.

Keywords: Malkā Hāns, Pākpattan, Punjab, history, identity.

DISCUSSION:

The province of Punjāb has the most prevailing historical background of Pakistan. This province shows close association between history and identity. The Arab traveler, Ibn-i Battūṭa came to India at the beginning of year (1334-1341) wrote; the Punjāb which means five rivers. The soil of Punjāb in Vedic period was recognized as *Sapta Sindhū*, the land of the seven rivers. Throughout the Greek era, the frontiers of Punjab were restrained to five rivers and they called it Pentapotamia, meaning five rivers.

The word Punjāb is a Persian word and its literal meaning is the, Land of Five Rivers. In ancient times, this region was famous as well as recognized for its rivers. In this context, its first illustration is found in *Yājurveda*. In *Rig Veda*, two terms have been used named as *Sapta Sindhu* meaning, Land of Indus River and its six branches; and *Pancājana* meaning, land of five tribes. These rivers were Sindhu (Indus), *Satadri* (Satluj), *Sarasvati*, *Purasoni* (Ravi) *Asikni* (Chenab), *Vitasta* (Jhelum) and *Sosoma* (Saon). The other rivers are, for example, *Vipasa* or *Beas*, *Drsadvati*, *Chitang* or *Chautang* and *Apaya* or *Apaga* are also found there. Regarding the foundation of *Sapta Sindhu* also mentioned in *Rig Veda*, according to which, as a result of reduction in height of some parts of the *Pir Panjal* Range, with increase in height of Himalaya Range along with Kashmir Lake some five million years ago. As a result water of Kashmir Lake began to flow in seven rivers. Due to these rivers, this land became famous as *Sapta Sindhu*.¹

According to this statement, the region was famous for a name of a powerful tribe named *Vahika* or *Bahika*. Five tribes include as *Yadū*, *Turvasa*, *Anū*, *Druhu* and *Pūru*. Each of this tribe is mentioned separately in *Rig Vedic* hymns. Western scholars Roth onwards generally agreed that various documents

¹ Ikram Ali Malik, *Tārikh-i Punjāb* (Lahore: Wordstyle Composing Point, 1990), 1.

are linked in this specific context, no other pentad anywhere else in Vedas can possibly referred to human groups.² In *Ramayana*, a term *Panjānda* meaning land of five streams is found. In fact, In Persian language, the word Punjāb is also known as *Panjnāda*. In the geographical context of Alexander the great, the names of rivers such as *Hydaspas* for Jhelum River, *Hesidrus* for Satluj and *Hyphasis* for Beas have been used in the books. According to well-known geographer Arrian stated all the rivers were accomplished for shipment except Satluj. The land of Punjab was attributed with the name of powerful tribe Tak or Takka. The famous Chinese historian Hwen Thsang has written the name of the state by name Tse-Kia or Taki. Alberuni has also written the names of the rivers, Sindh as (*Biyatha*), Jhelum as (*Chandraha*) *Biyaha*, *Iravati*, *Shatlardar* and *Sarsat*.³

The distinct eccentric of Punjāb is hidden behind its cultural diversity which has come up with the significances of cultural combination of various tribes and clans such as Aryan as well as army of Alexander. It also embraced with Chinese, Turks, Mongols, Arabs and Europeans.

The Pākpattan was once a walled city and the inner areas are still remaining archetypal form of an ancient town. It has survived remarkably intact with its original character. However, the main part of the fortification wall is extinct yet the characteristic of construction can still employed as residence. Geographically the city is constrained on the northeast through district Okāra, on southeast via Bahāwnagar district, the Satluj River separating the two districts. On Southwest lies district Vehārī and on the Northwest district Sahīwāl is located.⁴

In 997 CE, Sulṭān Maḥmūd Ghaznavi, assumed control of the *Ghaznāvīd* dynasty, established by his father, Sulṭān Šebūktagīn. He subjugated the *Shāhīs* in Kabul, and chased it by the domination of Punjāb province. The Delhi Sultanate and later Mughal Empire ruled the region. The Punjab region became largely Muslim owing to *šūfī* saints their shrines (*dargāhs*) are considered blessing of God on the land of Punjab region. The Arab explorer Ibn-ī Baṭṭūṭa visited the town in 1334, and paid obeisance at Bābā Farīd's shrine.⁵ "The *Zafernāma* mentions that Timūr visited Ajūdhan, (Pākpattan) shrine of Bābā Farīd in 1398 in order to pray for increased strength."⁶ "After the decline of the Mughal Empire, the Sikh conquered Pākpattan district. During the period of British rule, Pākpattan increased in population as well in importance. The popularity of this city is due to mystic personality Bābā Farīd. Basically he is the man who renamed Ajūdhan Pākpattan. Before his arrival to Pākpattan, there were at least thirty thousand Hindus and Sikhs in Pākpattan. After the independence of Pakistan in 1947, the minority Hindus and Sikhs migrated to India while Muslim migrated from India settled in the Pākpattan district."⁷

Punjāb is traditionally regarded as strength of the Indus Civilization. Descending from the primeval inhabitants of these regions, they contributed to religious and historical associations with the West Asians, as well as their counterparts in the subcontinent. They identified the cultural narration of the whole South Asian subcontinent. The people of Indus Civilization, often identified as Dravidians, established their settlements many millennia before the expansion of great Indian religions such as Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. As their early hymns suggested, these religions evolved in the regions of Indus Civilization. Numerous historians had promptly acknowledged the division of South Asian history into ancient, medieval and modern periods. "In the breakdown of these three overarching phases,

² History of Punjab, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/596592?seq=1> (Accessed on 31st march 2021).

³ Ikram Ali Malik, *Tarikh-i Punjab* (Lahore: Wordstyle Composing Point, 1990), 2, 3.

⁴ Ihsan H. Nadiem, *Punjab Land, History, People* (Pakistan: Al-Faisal Nashran, 2005), 115.

⁵ Richard M. Eaton (1984). Metcalf, Barbara Daly (ed.). *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*. University of California Press. ISBN 9780520046603. Retrieved 29 August 2017.

⁶ Agha Hussain Hamadani, *The Frontier Policy of the Delhi Sultans* (Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 1992), 156.

⁷ Mian Allah Baksh Tariq, *Tārīkh-i Pākpattan* (Pakistan: Al-Farid Academy, 1998), 38.

the Indus Valley civilization and classical Hindu period would usually form the earliest phase combining early history with prehistoric times. Curiously, the past of Dravidian received little attention in this context, but the Aryan and Hindu epochs, particularly in the Northern regions, got a major portion of Indian literary work.”⁸

Religion builds up civilizations which play a vital role in enrichment of cultures. According to the Vedic literature, the Vedic period is regarded as Indo-Aryan culture that conquered Central Asia and urbanized in Punjab region. Punjab is immensely rich in its inheritance, Pākpattan is a renowned district of province Punjab and it is also famed as the city of saints. It is affluent in its cultural and spiritual values along with its architectural legacy.

Differing narrations as well numerous theories as to how the name Pākpattan emerged. “One of the most accepted narration states that Bābā Farīd used to perform ablution, before his prayers on the banks of the Satluj River. One day a man has passed by while Bābā Farīd was engaged in performing ablution and told him that this area of the river bank was not unsoiled enough to perform ablution in. In response, Bābā Farīd asserted that this river bank was pure. The name Pākpattan significant to the *ṣūfī* saint Bābā Farīd who made this city his abode, but it was long after his death that Ajhūdan became known as Pākpattan. *Pāk* and *pattan* are two Punjābī words that mean *pure river reservoir* in Punjabi language. Ajhūdan was formally renamed Pākpattan by Akbar after his visit to the shrine of Bābā Farīd.”⁹

The word Pākpattan comprises of two words Pāk and Pattan means, clean dockland (Pattan means a dockland or place where ships or boats stay). The city named by Saint Bābā Farīd. It is said, once Saint Farīd having ablution on the bank of the Satluj. As narration is famous once a man told to the Saint that this water is unclean and place is dirty then Saint Farīd responded to him "no its not dirty, it is clean water and place in the native language Pāk pattan. However, the Mughal emperor Akbar declared the name Pākpattan.¹⁰ As Miles Irving stated in his article, “it is not precise to say, as Cunningham does, that Pākpattan was the ferry town over the Sutlej, where the many routes coverage towards West. In fact it is doubtful whether there ever was a ferry town over that river. It is at present some six miles from its western bank, and generally watering tendency of Punjab Rivers makes it improbable that the Satluj was ever much nearer. Its modern name is ‘Holy Ferry’, given by emperor Akbar, prefers not to a ferry over Satluj but to one over a branch called *Bishārat nālā* (Aqueduct or watercourse), which was long ago running under the city.”¹¹

According to the local tradition, the real name of this town was *Jadwa*, but its name Ajūdhan is recoded in the historical evidences with which we have encountered. Another name that appears to us is derived from the *Yaūdheya* tribe, the modern *Johiyās*. “Johiyās are identified with *Yaūdheya Gana* who was an ancient tribal confederation who lived in the area between the Indus River and the Ganges River.”¹²

Another narrative is that its name as Ajūdhan, while some believes that it was also called *Garwa*.¹³ They are referred to Pānini’s¹⁴ *Ashtādhyāyī*¹⁵ and *Gaṇapāṭha*.¹⁶ There are other reference of them namely in

⁸ Iftikhar H. Malik, *The History of Pakistan* (USA: Greenwood, 2008), 9 -23.

⁹ Muhammad Qasim Firishta, *Tārikh-i Firista* (Lahore: Rana Sultan Mamood, 1991), 189.

¹⁰ Gazetteer of Montgomery District, *Sahīwāl* (1883-1884) Punjab, 27.

¹¹ Zulfiqar Ahmad, *Notes on Punjab and Mughal India* (Lahore: Sang-e- Meel Publications, 2002), 50.

¹² Ibid., 50.

¹³ Mian Allah Baksh Tariq, *Tārikh-i Pākpattan* (Pakistan: Al-Farid Academy, 1998), 38.

¹⁴ Pānini was an ancient Sanskrit philologist, grammarian and scholar in ancient India.

¹⁵ *Ashtādhyāyī* was the oldest linguistic and grammar text of several languages and of Sanskrit.

¹⁶ *Gaṇapāṭha* means a collection of the *Gaṇas* or series of words following the same grammatical rule.

Mahābhārata, *Mahamayurī*, *Brihat-Samhita*, *Purānas*, *Chandravyakarānā* and *Kashīka*. They were in zenith of their power from about 200 BCE to 400 AD.¹⁷ Hindu historians relate myths with the significance of its name as Ajūdhan. The interpretation of a traditional legendary version is based upon mythical details from the *Ramayana*. The ancient epic *Ramayānā* narrates in the *Balakāṇḍa* that Ram Chandra and his brothers *Kaushalya* and *Dasharatha* were born in *Ayaūdheya*. He wedded Sitā. Though born in a majestic family, their life is defined in the Hindu texts as one challenged by unpredicted changes such as banished into impecunious and intricate circumstances and ethical dilemmas. The most distinguished is the kidnapping of Sitā by demon-king Ravana, who incarcerated her in Lanka for a year. Ram Chandra resided in *Ayaūdheya* when he was succeeded. Hukum Singh Panwar wrote that its ancient name was *Ajudhan* or *Ayodhin*, which has been identified as the original *Ayaūdheya* of the Rig Vedic times.¹⁸

This ancient town has been bespoke by different nations; different revolutions wiped this town many times and reduced it to ashes. "This old city is existed on a big mound called Dhakī meaning something hidden. This Dhakī¹⁹ is on higher altitude than the area around; there were gates to enter in the city. It is said that city was destroyed seventeen times in the history by great warriors. All times after destruction a new city was built on the ruins of old city."²⁰ "General Alexander Cunningham has recognized Pākpattan, known as Ajūdhan in the ancient times, as a town that appears in the exertion of Hellenic historians and other Classic writers under the names of Ohyrakae, Sydrakae, Sundraykae and Hydaekae. Great conquerors like Maḥmūd Ghaznāvī, Timūr and traveler like Ibn-i Baṭṭūta crossed Sutlej from Pākpattan that had been principal ferry crossing on river Sutlej for centuries. Medieval history of the town started when Amīr Šebūktagīn subdued Pākpattan, followed by Ibrāhīm Ghaznāvī in (r.980-1080)."²¹ Ghaznāvīd occupied Pākpattan more than one hundred and fifty years. During his region Pākpattan flourished an affluent position in subcontinent.²² History of subcontinent represents the various regions and communities in all its diversity.

The Delhi Sultanate and subsequently Mughal Empire governed the state. Sultān Muḥammad Ghūrī defeated Ghaznāvīd rulers in (1175) and occupied western sight, among them Ajūdhan was prominent.²³

During the region of Balban, Ajūdhan was known for its defense reason. Mongols attacked on Punjab in 1279 AD, due to Pākpattan and Dipālpūr, it was possible to defy Mongols for defense.²⁴ After the downfall of the Mughal Empire, the Sikh occupied Pākpattan district. In the course of British rule, Pākpattan district strengthen in population and status (fig. 1).

¹⁷ History of Pakpattan, www.daultana.com/daultanas_historical_prospective (Accessed on 15th march, 2017).

¹⁸ Mian Allah Baksh Tariq, *Tārikh-i Pākpattan* (Pakistan: Al-Farid Academy, 1998), 38.

¹⁹ Dhakī means something hidden.

²⁰ Montgomery Gazetteer, Research Society Punjab, 514.

²¹ Ihsan H. Nadiem, *Lahore A Glorious Heritage* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 2006), 115.

²² Syed Hasan Riaz, *Pakistan Naguzeer Tha* (Karachi: Karachi University Research Centre, 1984), 125.

²³ Muhammad Qasim Firishta, *Tārikh-i Firista* (Lahore: Rana Sultan Mamood, 1991), 219.

²⁴ Mian Alah Baksh Tariq, *Tārikh-i Pākpattan* (Pakistan: Al-Farid Academy, 1998), 69, 70.

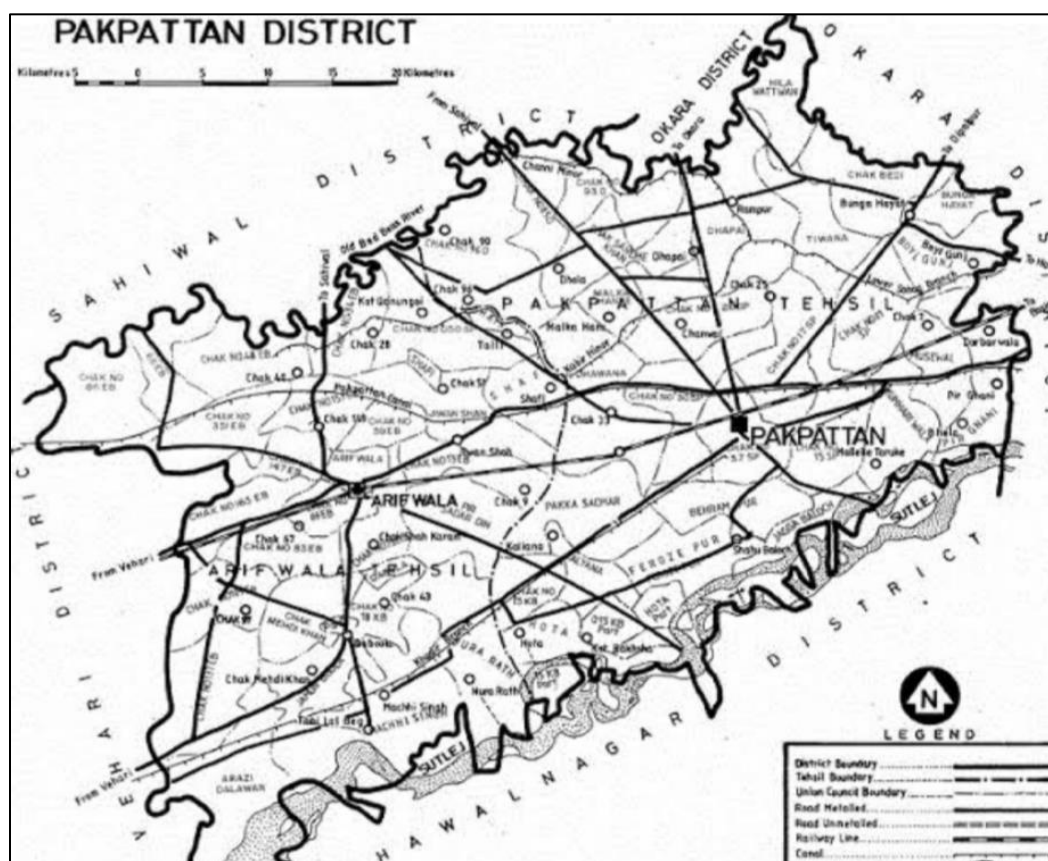


Figure 1 Location Map of Pākṣpattan District, Mian Allah Baksh Tariq, *Tārikh-i Pākṣpattan* (Pakistan: Al-Farid Academy, 1998), 10.

According to Imperial Gazetteer of India, from a very early date it was a place of importance, as the principal ferry across the Sutlej and meeting place of the great western roads from Dera Ghazī Khān and Dera Ismaīl khān.²⁵ The Pākṣpattan was reigned by Maurya Empire, Indo-Greek kingdom, Kushān Empire, Gupta Empire, White Huns, Kushano-Hephthalites. Pākṣpattan is also somewhat renowned all over South Asia, for a numeral *ṣūfī* shrine, of which the most prominent is that of Shaikh Farīd, of the Chishtī Order. During Lodhī's reign, Pākṣpattan ruled the subcontinent for thirty seven years. The last ruler of the family was sluggish and incompetent. During the reign of Bahlūl Lodhī, the founder of Sikh religion, Bābā Gūrū Nānak, caste a great influence on the religious history of Hindustan by his reflection. When the followers of Gūrū Nānak increased in strength, they were arrested and imprisoned according to sultanate law. But in 1526 when Bābur got kingdom of Hindustan after his victory over Pānīpat, he not only met Gūrū Nānak but also released him from prison. After his release, Guru reached Pākṣpattan while travelling to Sindh and went on the tomb of Bābā Farīd. Both religious scholars met in Pākṣpattan, this place had been named as Nānak-ser. After the death of Guru Nānak, his work was handed over to Guru Auglav, later on fifth leader in Sikhdom, Arkansas Dave included this work in his sacred book while compiling *Garīnth Ṣāhib*. In *Garīnth Ṣāhib*, *Aṣḥlok* and four texts have been associated with Baba Farīd.

²⁵ [Pakpattan - Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. 19, 332.](#)

This is the reason for deep regard paid by Sikhs to Bābā Farīd. The Sikh regards deeply Bābā Farīd and listen him with utmost respect as his verses are included in *Grañth Śāhib*.²⁶

Before the creation of Pakistan, Sikhs and Hindus were living in large numbers in Malkā Hāns. There are many samādhīs which identified the strength of Sikhs at that time. The samādhī built in red bricks. It is located about two kilometers north of Pranāmī Temple.

This samādhī is now using for common purpose (store) and its physical condition is almost destroyed. Another building is also constructed within samādhī, which has become a cause of its deterioration. The structure of samādhī is built in indigenous characterization as it stands in octagonal plan (fig. 2).



Figure 2 Existing exterior of samādhī at Malkā Hāns, Saima Sharif, JPEG image.

Inside both sides of entrance door are decorated with carved niches, which have floral patterns but now these are decayed because of weathering and corrosion and are now beyond recognition. In one of the samādhī, fresco paintings are still surviving but in poor condition. While the other, only brick structure is remained, whereas in the third and last building has ruined structure, which is also known as There glimpses are given the sense of mythological characterization of Hinduism as well as Sikhism is depicted (figs. 3, 8).

²⁶ Mian Allah Baksh Tariq, *Tārikh-i Pākṡattan* (Pakistan: Al-Farid Academy, 1998), 87, 88.



Figure 3 The Brick Structure of samādhīs built on octagonal plan, Saima Sharif, JPEG image.



Figure 4 Series of frescoes from the interior, Saima Sharif, JPEG image.



Figure 5 Mythological representation on the interior wall, Saima Sharif, JPEG image.



Figure 6 Interpretation of Krishna and Surdas (poet), Saima Sharif, JPEG image.



Figure 7 *The gathering of gūrūs (saints)*, Saima Sharif, JPEG image.



Figure 8 *The Interior of samādhi (demolished)*, Saima Sharif, JPEG image.

The remaining structures are giving the evidence of the glory of this town where the Hindu religion flourished as before the commencement of Ghaznāvid rule in Punjab in 997 AD. It was predominantly a Hindu majority area. It will be relevant if evidences of Hindu cult objects found from certain cities of Punjab.²⁷ Malkā Hāns is one of the antiquated towns of the district Montgomery. The renowned nations such as Salāwiyā and Mājūkā lived here in the remote times which later on perished. In the era of Shāhjahān, this city was populated by Malik Muḥammad Qaūm Hāns by his name. One of the leaders of this tribe, Quṭb al-Dīn procured its property with special order by Aurangzīb ‘Ālamgīr during (r.1658-1707) Quṭb al-Dīn was well versed scholar. He was the mentor of high gentry of Delhi. Aurangzīb esteemed his knowledge and respectful status as well as rewarded him this land, in which Quṭbabād and district Salīm kūṭ were also included. The deserted site of Quṭbabād may still be seen on the bank of old Sohāg, nearly south of Malkā Hāns. During the period of Shaikh Quṭb al-Dīn, this region progressed rapidly. His descendants got its domination later on. In 1748, during the reign of Aḥmad Shāh, son of Muḥammad Shāh, when the Mughal Empire weakened, Muḥammad ‘Azīm Hāns declared its independence and became the ruler of this region.

According to the national consensus of 1748, Chāndā Singh and Junaidā Singh occupied this land. But Shaikh Subhān and Muḥammad ‘Azīm Hāns defeated the Sikhs. After Muḥammad ‘Azīm, his brother Muḥammad Hayāt became the ruler. After the demise of Shaikh Subhān, the authority control took over by Shaikh Ghulām Rasūl. They had clashed with Shaikh Ghulām Rasūl and Muḥammad Hayāt in Malkā Hāns. With the support of Nika’īs and offered half of the region to Nika’ī people. Later on, Muḥammad Hayāt took the Nika’īs people away with the help of Dōgars. Nika’ī people had forced to Ranjīt Singh to leave Malkā Hāns. When the English defeated Sikhs, one of the persons from the family of Muḥammad Hayāt, Shaikh Nūr Muḥammad was designated as leader. Later on, this region came under English domination.²⁸

Hāns is acknowledged as a great tribe. “Hāns’s tribe is one of the significant tribes of Mughal India who had its influence especially in the Sahīwāl region. The tribe prides to be of Qureshī origin which was called ‘Hans’ after the name of Ḥaḍrat Hanī bin ūrwa who had practically helped Ḥaḍrat Muslim-bin ‘Aqīl, during his visit to Kūfa before the tragic incident of Karbala. Ḥaḍrat Hanī-bin ūrwa was martyred by Ubayd Allāh Ibn-i Ziyād before the incident of Karbala due to his open condemnation upon Yazid and his support to Ḥaḍrat Imām Ḥuṣṣain. After the incident of Karbala, the tribe of Ḥaḍrat Hanī-bin ūrwa moved from Iraq to Afghanistan and then to India and some of them settled down in district Haṣṣār and others came to Pakkā Sidhār in Sāhīwāl district.”²⁹ The Hāns tribe considered themselves as to be of Qureshī origin and was one of the many tribes that occupied the upland of the Neelī Bār³⁰ before the start of establishment of the Punjab by the British Magnificent authorities in the 19th century. settled in Afghanistan, and afterwards came to this country and fixed their residence where Pakkā Sidhār now stands The Qureshī is the Arab tribe to which the Prophet (PBUH) belonged to. According to Hāns ethnicities, their descendants left Arabia and settled in the Bār during the period of Muḥammad bin Tughlaq (r. 1325-1351).³¹

The Hāns were then simple land holders, living a little to the north-west of Pākpattan. Shaikh Quṭb became powerful, owing to his ability and influence at court, and wealthy as the Sohāg and Dhaddar

²⁷ Shaikh Khurshid Hasan, *Pakistan: its Ancient Hindu Temples and Shrines* (Pakistan: Muhammad Munir Khawar, 2008), 25.

²⁸ Montgomery Gazetteer, (in Urdu) vol. IV: Ashraf Qudsi, 27th October 1964, 23, 24.

²⁹ Ibid., 83.

³⁰ Neelī Bār means a geographical region in Punjab. Bār is the name given to ranges in Punjab which had dense forests before the advent of the current channel irrigation system.

³¹ Gazetteer of Montgomery District, Sahiwal (1883-1884) Punjab, 67.

streams flowed through his lands. The *tappā* or tract of the Hans was transferred by ‘Ālamgir from the paragon of Kābul to that of ‘Ālamgirpūr. At the downfall of the Mughal Empire, Shaiḵh Quṭb’s descendant made himself independent and about (1764), Muḥammad ‘Azīm was considered as chief of clan. He seized as much of country round Malkā Hāns as he could, but in 1766 the Sikhs overran it and took him prisoner.

History proves that religion is a crucial constituent and a significant power on the general life of the people. *Ā’in-i Akbarī* gives us a scanty detail of this area. Exploring this sleepy little agriculture town Pākpattan, where the Hindu architectural legacy of Pranāmī Temple is survived. Māhānt Darbār Singh had erected palace like five storey grand building of temple over 200 years ago. Dust of ages has covered the dais where samādhi of Dayā Rām, the founder of Pranāmī sect used to rest in the main chamber of the temple. Before partition large number of Hindūs had been visiting here and celebrated a big annual *melā* in the month of Chet.³² Hāns became powerful when Mughal emperor ‘Ālamgīr pondered a vast land around Malkā Hāns. The oral accounts show that Hans’s rulers built some tunnels (the underground passages). “Two tunnels were built from the fort in Pakkā Sidhār to the forts in Malkā Hāns and Chak Shafi Hāns. These underground passages had the capacity to allow the transfer of army from one city to another.”³³

There was another temple; it is situated in the middle of local bazaar which was existed nearby Pranāmī Temple. Accordingly, this temple was also the part of Pranāmī Temple and comprised on vast land at Malkā Hāns. The temple is erected on the high plinth and most of the building of this magnificent temple is ruined. It might be possible that those small temples were the part of this huge temple in the time of its zenith and due to high plinth there were might be possible to had underground routes (tunnels) which played a vital role in trading or might be possible they were used for defensive purpose because Pranāmī was a modern Hindu socio-religious movement and the area of subcontinent was under control of British. “Yet there were periods when the political motivations of Islamic rulers took strength from iconoclastic aspects of Muslim teaching and led to the devastation of many major Hindu temples. Episodically, since the 14th century, this history has provided rhetorical fuel for Hindu warriors enthusiastic to assert themselves against Muslim rivals. The bloody Partition of the South Asian subcontinent into India and Pakistan in 1947 added a new dimension. Mobilizing Hindu sensibilities about the sacredness of the land as whole, extremists have sometimes depicted the creation of Pakistan as a rape of the body of India.”³⁴ Before Independence the area of subcontinent was considered as geo-political delineation and moreover has characteristics of distinctive cultural appearance. However cultural diversity became a symbol of identity in the manifestations of architectural forms.

The architectural style of this tower is called *Sikhara*, it is pyramidal or tapering structure which represents the symbolical significance of height or mountain peak. The tower has square base and has a small entrance on its eastern side.

An inscription of word *Om* or (*Aum* with the generic Devanāgarī character) is written above the exterior side which is symbolical representation of ultimate reality. In the *Chhandogya Upanishad*, one of the best known sacred texts: according to the Mandukya Upanishad, *Om* or (*Aum*) expresses the four states of consciousness of man, from the lowest, corresponding to common daily experience (outwardly cerebral) to the highest, corresponding to his assimilation into spiritual. The sound ‘A’ symbolizes the first stage:

³² First month of the Nanakshahi calendar, this governs the activities within Sikhism. This month coincides with chaitra in the Hindu calendar as well as March, April in the Georgian calendar.

³³ Kamran Aziz Khan, Sr. Headmaster, Govt. High School 34/EB, *Lost Pages of History: The Hans Dynasty of Sahiwal Region* (Arifwala: Distt.Pakpattan, JPUHS, Vol. 27, No.2, July - December, 2014, 86.

³⁴ Robert s. Ellwood and Gregory D. Alles, *Encyclopedia of World Religion*, (USA: Facts on File, 1999), 461.

that of the ‘awakened’ man, who has not begun his inner ascension. The sound ‘U’ corresponds to the second stage: that of the sleeping man who has loosened his link with the outside world, but is still under the spell of *Māyā* in the form of ‘dream.’ The third stage, which is that of ‘dreamless sleep,’ where man reaches the threshold of absolute transcendental knowledge, is symbolized by the sound ‘M.’ finally, the fourth and last stage (*turīyā*), the one in which man actually experiences transcendental Truth and becomes one with Brahman, is symbolized by silence, which follows the expression of the consecrated syllable silence which is the only expression of the Absolute, the beginning less, attribute less Divine (*Nīrgūnā Bhāgāvān*).³⁵

Katha Upanishads has explained the essence of this ultimate level of this *mantrā*, he says The aim which all the *Vedas* affirms, which all asceticism aim at, and which human beings desire when they lead the life of persistence, he further defines, *Om* is syllable that touches the highest level. The whole *Vedic* scripture is concealed or wrapped with one sound, the *Om* or *Aum*, which has inseparable name and shape and intend the source of one’s creation.

The exterior of temple has a series of decorative motifs of trefoil and human face. These are in projected form on the surface of wall. The trefoil is a symbolical representation of holy trinity in Hinduism (three intersecting circles); while the sculpted faces in dark blue colour is also having a symbolical significance of lord Krishna. The series of decorative pattern is running on the exterior of temple but faces in human forms are appeared only on the exterior of entrance (figs. 9, 10).



Figure 9 Facade of Sikhara Temple in the main bazaar of Malkā Hāns, Saima Sharif, JPEG image.

³⁵ Vassilis G. Vitsaxis, *Hindus Epics, Myths and Legends in Popular Illustration* (London: Oxford University, 1978), 97.



Figure 10 Detailed view of decorative motifs on the exterior of temple, Saima Sharif, JPEG image.

A great *ṣūfī* Punjabi poet, Waris Shāh (Wārith Shāh) also shifted his residence to Malkā Hāns. He resided in a small room (*hujra*) adjacent to the historic mosque that was constructed by Hāns in 1340. Wārith Shāh's exact date of birth is not known but historians place it between (r.1710-1738). However, the year he completed his great work, *Hīr*, is surely 1766 as gives in his book's concluding stanza (fig. 11).

کھل ہانس دا ملک مشہور ملکا

جتھے شعر کیتا نال راس دے میں

Kharal Hāns dā mulk mashhūr malkā

*Jīthy shī'r kītā nal raas day main*³⁶

(tr.) The famous land of Kharal Hāns is 'Malkā Hāns'

where I composed my poetic verses for my friends.³⁷

³⁶ Mian Allah Baksh Tāriq, *Tārīkh-i Pākṣattān* (Pakistan: Al-Farid Academy, 1998), 104.

³⁷ Translation by the Author.



Figure 11 Interior of shrine embellished with poetic verses of Wārith Shāh, Saima Sharif, JPEG image.

CONCLUSION

Heritage plays a vital role in our cultural history. The expression of our identity is wrapped in its values. It is basically an interpretation of our past. It is great source, which portrays the evidence of our traditions that how our culture has developed. The article deals with the synthesis of cultural imputes of Pakistan that is revealing the innovation in the form of monumental legacy of religious and non-religious architecture. The integration of cultural personas gives rise to the advent of modern forms of architecture throughout the history of the subcontinent, which has its own aesthetics and exceptionality in manners.

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