

TOMB OF HAZRAT SHAH BURHAN - ITS HISTORY, ARCHITECTURE AND CONSERVATION PROBLEMS

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The city of Chiniot is situated on the slope of a rocky hill about three kilometres from the left bank of the river Chenab and 83 kilometres north-east of Jhang city. It is a Tehsil Headquarter of District Jhang. Chiniot is a historical city and its history is traced back prior to the Mughal Dynasty. It is doubtlessly of considerable antiquity. According to the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (1908), "Perhaps it is to be identified with Sakala¹."

The tradition is that "Chandan, a King's daughter, sister of a Chief called Machhi Khan, who was accustomed to hunt in man's attire, visited the spot on one of her expeditions and was so charmed with the site that she ordered a town to be built which was called Chandniot in her honour²."

In fact the name Chandniot became Chiniot with the passage of time. Presently the number of villages entitled Channi, justifies the presence of small accumulation of reed huts which later on merged into a big settlement to be known as Chiniot. Some others attribute it with a former tribe of Chandans, or Chandu who was very important figure in the story of Hir and Ranjha. The city saw the most prosperous days during the era of Emperor Shah Jahan, when Nawab Sadullah Khan Thahim was Prime Minister and Nawab Wazir Khan was Governor of the Punjab.

The city was also graced with pious persons like Hazrat Shah Ismail Bukhari, Makhdoom Jaliluddin Qureshi, Hazrat Jamiluddin Qureshi, Hazrat Sheikh Hussain Shah, and others. One among them named Hazrat Pir Sahib Shah Burhanuddin, was a respectable saint of this area.

A beautiful tomb of Hazrat Pir Sahib Shah Burhanuddin was constructed by Nawab Sadullah Khan, native of Chiniot, in 1063-1065 A.H./1656-1658 A.D. The tomb is situated almost in the heart of old city and falls in Khasra No.7042 of Mauza Chiniot No.1 surrounded by *Abadi Deh*, bounded on all four quarters as below:

to the North Railway Station at the distance of 2 Kilometre.

to the South Jhang Road at the distance of $\frac{1}{2}$ Kilometre.

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to the East Sargodha - Faisalabad Road at the distance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ Kilometre.

and to the West *Abadi Deh*, Chah Tali Walla.

Hazrat Pir Sahib Shah Burhanuddin son of Mohibullah Shah, a native of Chiniot was a pious saint and lived during the reign of Shah Jahan. His real name was Ahmad Tayyab. According to Faqir Safdar Hussain⁴ and Bilal Zubari⁵, he was born in 981 A.H./1574 A.C. Mazharul Islam⁶ the author of "Loke Punjab" mentioned that three different families headed by Sheikh Muhammad Ismail, Hazrat Shah Burhan and Abdul Wahab respectively migrated from Uchh Sharif and settled in Chiniot for the preaching of Islam.

Hazrat Shah Burhanuddin completed his religious education at an early age. In order to attain the sufism he had to under go many hardships and studied different schools of thought. He travelled to Multan, reached the shrine of Hazrat Bahauddin Zakaria and adopted Suharwardia Silsillah. He then visited Pakpattan, Hyderabad (Daccan) and Delhi, where he met different sufis and again studied the teachings of four prominent silsillahs i.e. Shafi, Maliki, Hambli & Hanfi. After finishing his education he came to Chiniot in 1010 A.H. 1603 A.C. and purchased a piece of land of 19 marlas from Kammas family. In 1022 A.H./1615 A.C. he again bought a piece of land of 10 kanal and constructed some buildings to be utilized as a residence for his followers⁷. According to local information, Emperor Shah Jahan also allotted some jagir to Shah Burhan.

Muslim mysticism in its essence, is a message of love. It aims at creating harmony in the conflicting elements of the society. The Khanqah of Hazrat Shah Burhanuddin at Chiniot was a place of pilgrimage for millions of people of all castes and creeds, Hindus and Muslimans. Hazrat Shah Burhan struggled day and night to create the atmosphere of love and good will which even to day is the greatest want of human society. Teeming crowds flocked to him and found spiritual satisfaction in his company. A calm spiritual atmosphere pervaded his dwelling. People suffering from different diseases discomfort, hardships of life found solace in his Khanqah so he was a great sufi. On the north east facade of the gate the following inscriptions are present with tile mosaic: (P1.1)

لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله
ناو عليا منظر العجايب خب عونا لك
في النوايب كل منم وعظم سنجي
بنيتك يا محمد و بولائك يا علي يا علي
محمد علي كايدي هر دو سر است كيسي كه خاك در شينيت خاك بر سراد
١٠٦٥ هـ ١٠٦٣ هـ