

# A Study on the Temples at Temple City Bishnupurduring Malla Dynasty (994 AC – 1682 AC)

Sarkar. Rakesh

Department of Silpa Sadana, Visva Bharati (A Central University), Santiniketan, West Bengal (India)

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### Corresponding Author

Email: sarkar93321[at]gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

From the very beginning Bishnupur has been considered as a famous tourist spot as it has historical importance, music, handicrafts as well as archeological value. The beautiful terracotta temples, Lal Bandh, Gate of Old Fort are the main attraction of the city. The Malla Dynasty established a large number of temples here therefore it is known as 'MandirNagaree' or Temple City.

## 1. Introduction

The Malla Dynasty ruled during 694- 1983 CE. Their province was spread over Bankura, Burdwan, Midnapur, Murshidabad and Chotanagpur plate which were called as Mallabhum. During their ruling period they took deep interest to develop unique architectural styles such as monuments, temples, etc. Their artistic interests, views placed the city into cultural heritage.

## 2. Objectives

- 2.1. To study the temples established by the Malla Dynasty during 994 AC- 1682 AC.

## 3. Research Methodology

Historical research method was used for this study purpose.

## 4. Temples Established During the Malla Dynasty

### 4.1. JagatMalla (994-1007)

JagatMalla, the nineteenth king, ruled Malla dynasty from 994 CE -1007CE. He first introduced Bishnupur as the capital of the Malla Dynasty during his ruling period. His remarkable architectural specimen was Mrinmoyee Temple.

**4.1.1. Mrinmoyee Temple (997 AC):** Mrinmoyee Temple was established in 997 AC in Bishnupur. It is rumoured that JagatMalla established this temple after getting command from goddess Durga, therefore goddess Durga is worshipped here in the name of goddess Mrinmoyee and the temple is known as Mrinmoyee temple. This temple is regarded as the oldest temple in the city.



### 4.2. BirHambir (1565-1620)

The Malla King BirHambir ruled the Mallabhum from 1565-1620 CE. He was a complete devotee of lord Krishna. His devotion inspired him to build temple dedicating lord Krishna, which is known as Rasmancha.

**4.2.1. Rasmancha (1600 AC):** Rasmancha was built in 1600 AC. Its length and width are 24.5 meter; height is 12.5 meter. This temple is a beautiful example of architectural pattern of Malla dynasty. The temple was built by using laterite stone and bricks. It looks like pyramid from its upper part, Bengali huts in the middle part and have Islamic architectural style from rest of the lower part. These three different aesthetic sense and architectural combination has been turned the temple into a unique emblem of amity.



#### 4.3. DhariHambirMalla Dev (1620-1626)

The 50<sup>th</sup> king of Malla dynasty was DhariHambirMalla. He had a deep devotion towards lord Krishna and lord Vishnu. He established the Malleswar Temple.

**4.3.1. Malleswar (1622 AC):** The Malleswar temple was dedicated to Lord Shiva. The term Malleswar means the adorable God of Malla. The temple was made of laterite stone.

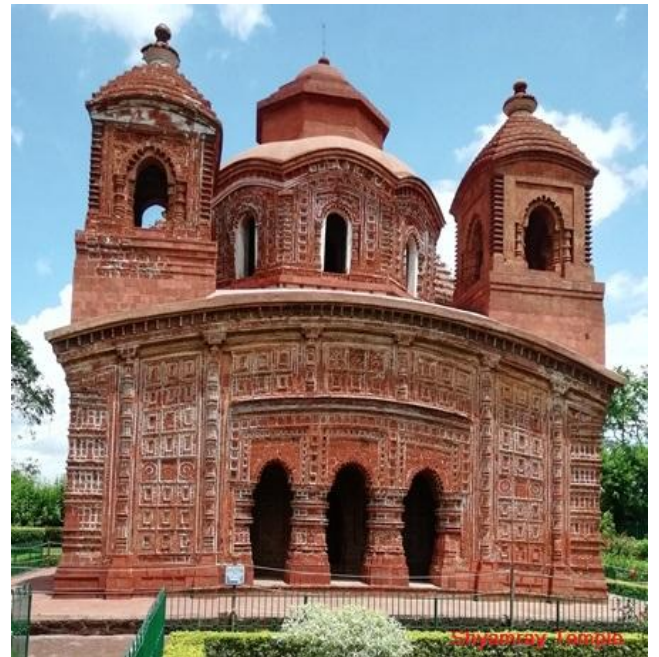


#### 4.4. Raghunath Malla Dev (1626- 1656)

Raghunath Malla Dev also known as Raghunath Singha was the 51<sup>st</sup> king of Malla Dynasty. His ruling period was from

1626 to 1656 CE. Shyamrai temple, Jor Bangla temple, Kalachand temple was established during his time.

**4.4.1. Shyamrai Temple (1643 AC):** The shymrai temple was built in 1643 CE. the temple is 11.4 meter in length and width, and 10.7 meter in height. The temple has an excellent aesthetic view. It's terracotta sculpture, floral motifs, graven image of Ramayana and Mahabharata story on the wall justified its artistry.



**4.4.2. Jor Bangla Temple (1655 AC):** Jor Bangla temple is also known as Krishnaray temple and kestorai temple. It is situated in the southern direction from Radhashyam Temple. This temple was built in 1655 by king Raghunath Malla Dev. the temple is 11.8 metre in length, 11.7 metre in width and 10.7 metre in height. Twin hut like terracotta temple in a single row is connected together and in the middle of the adjacent there is another four eaves or charchala is situated. The scenes of hunting, Ramayana, Mahabharata, social life style depicted on the wal are the excellent illustration of the skills and hard work and dedication of the artisan.



**4.4.3. Kalachand Temple (1656 AC):** kalachand Temple is an example of ekaratna temple and was made of laterite stone. Various mythological scenes including Krishna leela are depicted on the walls of the temple.



Kalachand Temple

#### 4.5. BirSingha Dev (1656-1682)

**4.5.2. RadhaLaljiu Temple (1658):** Malla king BirSingha Dev established this temple in the year of 1658. This temple is head by one sikhara. Traces of the decorative stucco decorations on relievo carving will still be seen on the front. The temple dedicated to Sri ridhika and sri Krishna,



Radha Laljiu Temple

**4.5.1. Madangopal Temple (1665 AC):** it is an example of panchratnamandir style. As its name suggests the temple was dedicated to the lord Madan Gopal. This temple was established by the Malla queen Shiromani Devi, the wife of King BirSingha. Again, the temple was made of laterite stones



Madangopal Temple

#### 5. Conclusion

The Malla Dynasty took a deep interest to build such masterpiece that combined both the artistic sense of Bengali huts with Islamic architectural style. It is found that though almost every king of the Malla Dynasty was devoted to the lord such as lord Vishnu, lord Krishna, lord Shiva, the Queens were also devoted towards the omnipresent and the temples are the vindication of their beliefs, attachments to the lord.

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