

## Development of Buddhist architecture in Bengal during Gupta and post-Gupta period

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There is preconception amongst a group of historians that period between the Gupta and the *Pāla* was a time of disorder and chaos, which is commonly known as the period of *Matsyanyayam*. It aids many architectural historians to believe that there was not enough architectural development during the period between. As a result, discussions on the architectural history of Bengal generally commenced from the *Pāla* period (c. 750 AD onwards).

Contrarily in the field of art and sculpture it is accepted that the thriving Buddhist *Pāla* art was a continuation of previous classical Gupta art forms, where post-Gupta period acted as the transition phase or a bridge. In addition, in the field of architecture rectangular Gupta shrine plan takes a mature cruciform shape during the *Pāla* period through a complex morphological development. Analyzing extant and new archaeological evidences it is evident that the Buddhist architecture of Bengal thrived during the intervening period, albeit under the patronage of local kings and rulers.

The nature of Buddhist shrine architecture of Bengal during the early Gupta, later Gupta, and post-Gupta periods will be presented in light of recent archaeological findings and architectural morphological analysis. Which will eventually cover the evolution of early Buddhist architectural forms of Bengal, focusing the development of *vihāra* and shrine structures.

### SHORT BIO

Mohammad Habib Reza is an architect and architectural historian, completed his Bachelor of Architecture degree from Khulna University in 2001 and PhD in architectural history and theory from Nottingham Trent University, UK in 2013. Later he joined as a Research Fellow in Nottingham Trent University and was involved in research projects funded by Nottingham Trent University and the Ministry of Heritage and Culture of Oman, for the documentation of traditional oasis settlements in Central Oman towards the delivery of culturally and technically informed Heritage Management Plans. He is also a founder member of the Centre for the study of Architecture and Cultural Heritage in India, Arabia and the Maghreb (ArCHIAM), jointly affiliated by NTU, MMU and Liverpool University, that provide an interdisciplinary research platform for historical and contemporary cultural developments across three interconnected global regions.

His interest focuses on the geometric and morphological development of architecture plus settlements and their connection with cultural, social and religious processes. In his doctoral dissertation he proposes the morphological development pattern of ancient and mediaeval Buddhist architecture of Bengal, which is also his prime field of interest. His research further explores the connection between Bengal and other culture and their architectural styles. Presently Reza is working as an Assistant Professor at BRAC University.