

Kantanagar temple is the most ornate among the late medieval temples of Bangladesh situated near Dinajpur town, which was built in 1752 by Maharaja Pran Nath of Dinajpur. The temple, a 50' square three storied edifice, rests on a slightly curved raised plinth of sandstone blocks, believed to have been quarried from the ruins of the ancient city of Bangarh near Gangharampur in West Bengal.



The confusion about the date of its construction can be settled from the record of a chronogram in the Sanskrit stone inscription, fixed on the northeast corner plinth of the temple. It records that Maharaja Prannath of Dinajpur began its construction about 1722.

It was completed by his adopted son Maharaja Ramnath, in Shaka era 1674 (1752 AD) in order to propitiate the consort of Rukmini in fulfillment of his father's wish. However, in the early 20th century Maharaja Girijanath Bahadur restored it substantially, except for the missing nine spires.

It was originally a navaratna temple, crowned with four richly ornamental corner towers on two storeys and a central one over the third storey. Unfortunately these ornate towers collapsed during an earthquake at the end of the 19th century. In spite of this, the monument rightly claims to be the finest extant example of its type in brick and terracotta, built by Bengali artisans.

**Terracotta Decoration** Every available inch of its wall surface from the base to the crest of its three stories, both inside and out, pulsates with an amazing profusion of figured and floral art in unbroken succession. The vast array of subject matter includes the stories of the Mahabharata (Mahabharata) and the Ramayana (Ramayana), the exploits of Krishna, and a series of extremely fascinating contemporary social scenes depicting the favourite pastimes of the landed aristocracy. The central cells is surrounded on all sides by a covered verandah, each pierced by three entrances, which are separated by equally ornate dwarf brick pillars. Corresponding to the three delicately caupsed entrances of the balcony, the sanctum has also three richly decorated arched openings on each face. Every inch of the temple surface is beautifully embellished with exquisite terracotta plaques, representing flora fauna, geometric motifs, mythological scenes and an astonishing array of contemporary social scenes and favourite pastimes.

However, one distinctly delightful aspect of the fabulous terracotta ornamentation of the Kantaji Temple (Kantajir Mandir) is its restraint in depicting erotic scenes. In this, it is unlike Orissan and South Indian temples.

Besides, there are many other monuments which incite tourist interest.