

Afghan Rulers and the Construction of Mosques in Medieval Delhi

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In my article "The Afghan Rulers and the Construction of Tombs in Delhi," in *Society and Culture of India and Southeast Asia*, vol. I (in Japanese, Tokyo, 1980), a commemorative volume for Prof. T. Yamamoto, I proposed the question, Why do the majority of extant tombs and graveyards in the Delhi area belong to the Lodhīs, the last of the five dynasties of the Delhi Sultanate? I discussed the differences between the kingship and nobility of the four Turkish dynasties of the Sultanate and that of the Lodhīs, the last and the only Afghan rulers of the Sultanate.

The Afghan nobles and tribal chiefs regarded Bahlūl Shāh Lodhī, the first Sultān of the Lodhī dynasty, as no more than a representative of the tribal chiefs. Even during the reign of Sikandar Shāh, who tried to raise the power and authority of the Sultān, the Afghan tribal sense of equality and brotherhood remained. The fact that the various tribal chiefs and Afghan nobles were uninhibited in their construction of tombs and graveyards, some of which exceed those of the Sultāns in size and scale, may be due to this characteristic of Afghan kingship and nobility.

In the present article on mosques built by the Afghan ruling class in the Delhi area, I suggest than an almost identical phenomenon as in the case of tombs and graveyards can be found in the case of mosques built during the later Sultanate period. Although the trend of building various types of mosques had begun during the reign of Fūrūz Shāh Tughluq, and the

social and religious functions of mosques differ from those of tombs, it can be hypothesized that the egalitarian character of the kingship and nobility of the Afghan ruling class is one of the reasons for the increase in the number of mosques built under the Afghan regime during the Sultanate period.