

Volume 1

Number 057

The Taj Mahal

Lead: On the Jumna River in the city of Agra, India, is the crowning jewel of Indo-Islamic architecture. Built by the emperor of India, Shah Jahan, the structure is one of the most elaborate works of art ever erected.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Jahan inherited the throne of India at birth and at a fairly early age met and fell deeply in love with a beautiful woman, Arjumrand Band Begun. As his favorite, Arjumrand bore many of the

emperor's children and they lived happily until in 1631 she died during childbirth - her fourteenth in eighteen years. So devastated was Jahan by her death that he locked himself in his room for many days. When he emerged he sent for India's finest architects, sculptors and craftsmen. Construction started shortly after the queen's death and for more than a year twenty thousand people worked to complete her tomb. Finished in 1648 it is set in a huge rectangular park and towers 187 feet above the river.

The center dome is surrounded by four marble-faced minarets, one at each corner. On a lower level a mosque dominates the western side. It is matched by an assembly hall on the

east. At the heart of the white marble building is the burial chamber.

Originally the emperor intended to build a duplicate in black marble for himself on the opposite bank of the river connected to his wife's tomb by a bridge. However, in 1658, before Shah Jahan could realize his ambition, he died. He is buried with his beloved Arjumrand in the Taj Mahal.

"A Moment in Time" is produced at the University of Richmond. This is Dan Roberts.

Resources

Carroll, David. *The Taj Mahal*. New York, NY: Newsweek Publishing Company, 1973.

**Gascoigne, Bamber. *The Great Moghuls*. New York, NY:
Harper and Row, Publishers, 1971.**

**Kramrisch, Stella. *The Art of India: Traditions of Indian
Sculpture, Painting and Architecture*. New York, NY:
Phaidon Publishing House, distributed by Garden City
Books, 1954.**

Copyright by Dan Roberts Enterprises, Inc.