



CONTRIBUTION OF NAWAB'S OF BHOPAL STATE IN DEVELOPMENT OF SANCHI.

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ABSTRACT

I want to throw light on the contribution of Nawab's (Rulers) of Bhopal State on conservation of Sanchi. As we all know Sanchi is a world famous Buddhist archaeological World Heritage site. The Stupas at Sanchi are amazing specimens of architecture which were built around the 3rd century BC. British rediscover Sanchi in 1818 and in 1851, Major Alexander Cunningham first excavated in the reign of Nawab Shahjahan Begum followed by Sir Jon Marshall in 1912 to 1919 financially sported by Nawab of Bhopal state.

KEYWORDS: Sanchi. Bhopal State. Buddhism, World Heritage Site, Epigraphy.

INTRODUCTION

As we all know that Sanchi is a world famous Buddhist archaeological World Heritage site in centre India. The stupas at Sanchi are amazing specimen of architecture. Sanchi was build around 3rd century B.C. In this research paper we are talking about the contributions of Nawabs of Bhopal in the development of Sanchi. As we know that before independence Bhopal was a free princely state & second largest Muslim princely state in India (Uddin, 1931-32).

IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

The earliest record of Sanchi in Bhopal state dates back to 1130 A.H. 1718 A.D., when the state's founder, Sardar Dost Muhammad Khan, defeated a force of 2000 soldiers led by his brother-Sher Muhammad Khan to take Sansi, another name for Sanchi (Irfan, 1961). Later on, in the reign of H.H Nawab Shahjahan Begum during the development of second face of Bhopal State Railway British rediscover Sanchi under the supervisor of Major Alexander Cunningham an army man conducted the first excavations on the mount of Sanchi, where he discovered



numerous ancient weapons and jewelry (Begum, 1873). As a result, he was gifted with numerous incredible artifacts from Sanchi. Sariputta and Maha Mogalanna, two of Lord Buddha's most cherished pupils, had their relic caskets stolen from stupas. He carried them to England and sold them to the Victoria and Albert Museum. Major Alexander Cunningham also wrote a book on the excavations at Sanchi "The Bhilsa Topes - Buddhist Monuments of Central India: Alexander Cunningham" H.H Nawab Shahjahan Begum translate this book in Urdu "Tarikh-e-Sanchi" This rare book with 630-odd pages, essentially a manuscript produced using calligraphy is a rare volume preserved at the national archives of Indiaregional office Bhopal. After visiting Sanchi in 1905 visit to Bhopal State, Lord Curzon asked H.H Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum to donate Sanchi to the Indian Archaeology Department (Cunningham, 1854). As a result, the Bhopal Durbar began the IInd phase of excavation and conservation work at Sanchi under the direction of Sir John Marshall. At that time, Sir John Marshall served as the head of India's archaeological department. The second museum of the princely state of Bhopal was built in Sanchi under his direction and Sir John Marshall's leadership, where all the rare artifacts and other items discovered in Sanchi were kept. Sir John Marshall had offered to take the antiquities from Sanchi to England in 1912, but H.H Nawab Sultan Jahan declined. The princely state of Bhopal paid for the construction of this museum.

Sir John Marshall also dedicated his books on Sanchi to H.H Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum (Gupta, 2013). Colonel C.E. Luord, the political agent for Bhopal at the time, received a letter from The Bhopal Durbar was informed by Nawabzada Hamidullah Khan about the relics, caskets, and other items that Major Alexander Curmirigham had taken from Sanchi and given to the British Museum. As a result, the claim on the priceless items took precedence, and another case on the same subject was filed in the Viceroy's office. Following World War II, the Mahabodhi Society of Sri Lanka and the British Buddhist Society both made claims on these artifacts.

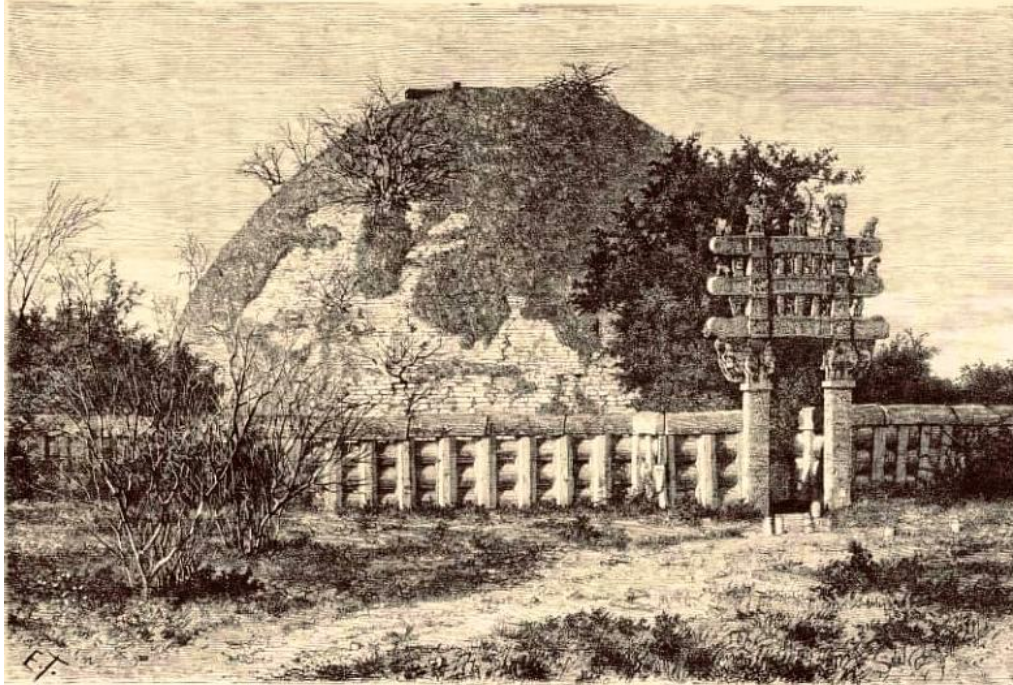
In 1946, the Mahabodhi association and the Nawab of Bhopal finally came to an arrangement in which it was determined that the relics would be finally housed at a recently built vihara in Sanchi. On December 27, 1947, following this arrangement, H.H. Nawab Hamidullah Khan of the Bhopal State lay the cornerstone for a brand-new vihara in Sanchi called Chetiya giri



Vihar. Under the direction of H.H. Nawab Hamidullah Khan, the architects of the princely state of Bhopal built and created the vihara. In a spectacular and appropriate ceremony on November 30, 1952, Buddhist leaders from Bhutan, Cambodia, Japan, Sri Lanka, and many other countries participated. H.H. Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum and H.H. Nawab Hamidullah Khan show their key interest in development of Sanchi. From 1920 onwards Sanchi is set as one of the famous truest destination of India. According to the reports of Political Department Bhopal state preserve at National Archives of India regional office Bhopal following events related to Sanchi are as follow In the year 1921 - H.E Prince Edward, Prince of Wales visit Sanchi. In the year 1923 - Student of Deccan College visit Sanchi for Research. In the year 1924-1925 - The Royal Highnesses Prince and Princes Arthur duke of Connaught visit Sanchi. Major Pilking British Indian Army Officer Visit Sanchi. In the year 1926 - His. Majesties the King Leopold 111 and Queen Astrid of Belgium Visit Sanchi. The Director General of Archaeology survey of India visit Sanchi. In the year 1929 - During the visit to Bhopal state Mahatma Gandhi Visit Sanchi. In the year 1944 - H.H The Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda State Visit Sanchi.

CONCLUSION

This represent the Persian language's vast cultural heritage, it might be said. The preservation and restoration of epigraphs in Bhopal city should always come first, even before the risk of demolition is even discussed, because once they are gone, they can never be brought back to their original form. A significant portion of this heritage is severely decayed. I have taken the opportunity to transfer knowledge in the conservation of these Bhopal state eras on a small scale. These are my findings based on documents I discovered at the National Archives of India's regional office in Bhopal, which demonstrate the Nawab's of Bhopal's consistent prioritization of Sanchi.



**Fig.1- Old Photo of Sanchi Stupa from Mount of Sanchi.
(Photo Courtesy: National Archive of India Regional Office Bhopal.)**



**Fig.2- Lord Curzon and Lady Curzon Visit to Bhopal on 28 November 1911.
(Photo Courtesy: Bhopai Tales Face Book Page.)**



Fig.3- H.H Nawab Hamidullah Khan lays foundation stone at Sanchi on December 27, 1947.
(Photo Courtesy: <https://governor.mp.gov.in/>)

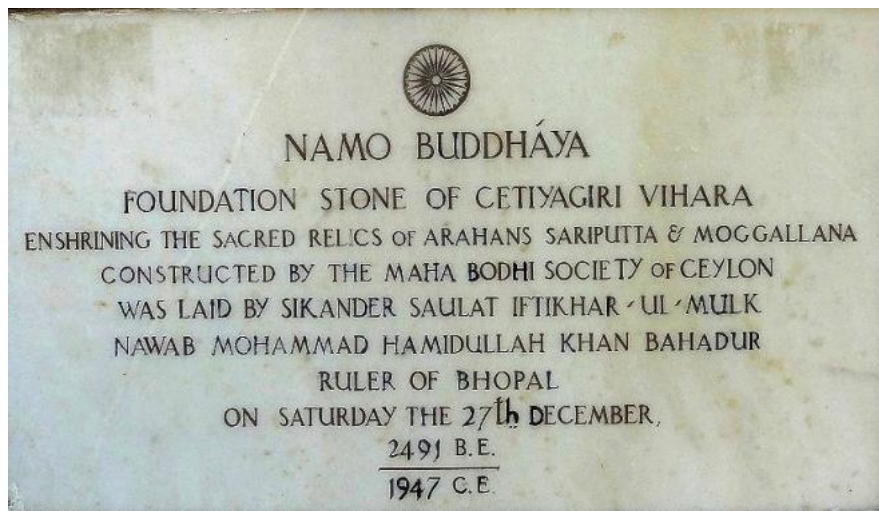


Fig. 4. Epigraph at Cetiya Giri Vihara at Sanchi.



Fig. 5- Cetiyyiri Vihara at Sanchi
(Photo Courtesy: Shri Ptandit Uprndra Narayan Pahalwan.)



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