

No. 731, dated Bhopal, 13th December 1882.

From—The Curator of Ancient Monuments in India,

To—The Assistant to the Curator of Ancient Monuments for Central India.

Your attention is directed to the following points in respect of the work at Sanchi:—

(1) The first works to be attended to are—The re-erection of the fallen gateways, *i.e.*, the western and southern gates of the Great Tope, and repair to the small gateway close by. Arrangements for these should take precedence of all other work. If you find that a heavy timber scaffold cannot be provided here in Bhopal, it will be necessary to get the loan of iron rails from Mr. Geoghegan, and to arrange at once for their carriage to Sanchi. This will be somewhat costly and take time. A certain amount of quarrying will have to be done on the Sanchi Hill to supply missing portions of the gates, &c., and you should, in consultation with Mr. John Lewis, the subordinate placed at my disposal, make out a complete list of all tools and plant which you will require, and take immediate steps for obtaining them on loan from the Railway contractor or from the Durbar, or else by purchasing them.

(2) I am disposed to postpone doing anything to the surface of the great hemispherical dome of the tope; the renovated portion shows signs of settling down, and during this, pointing the masonry joints would be useless. Moreover, the dome was originally plastered over, as may be seen in certain parts; and after the railing has been replaced on the summit, it will be time to consider what is best to be done with the dome surface.

(3) The upper railing and Tee of the tope should as far as possible be re-erected.

(4) An approach path should be made up the side of the hill, and steps cut in the rock where necessary. The causeway to the small tope on the west should also be improved by cutting steps, &c.

(5) A good deal remains to be done in jungle clearing, and all the buildings and remains on the hill should be completely freed from creepers and trees. The tree near the northern gateway of the Great Tope should be felled in several pieces, and for this you will want some large saws and axes.

2/1/9

(6) Mischievous chipping of carvings still goes on, and can only be prevented by erecting a wall all round the area covered by buildings; but as there is abundance of stone available on the hill, it will not be difficult to make a 7 foot dry masonry wall to surround the Great Tope and the adjoining Chaitya temple and Vihara. The small tope to the west should also be so protected, and gates under lock and key be provided at each place, so that the straying of cattle and trespass by idlers and mischievous persons may be prevented. The headman of Sanchi Kanakhera should have charge of the keys and be held responsible.

(6) I think a good deal may be done to the railing round the Great Tope by straightening the piers and holding them erect by iron bars let into the plinth of the tope.

(7) A recent earthquake has caused a serious crack right across the bottom of the right pier of the northern gateway. Fortunately the crack is nearly in a horizontal plain; but it would, I think, be well to tie the top of the two piers of the gate by iron bars to the tope itself, and thus lessen the danger of falling backwards or forwards, should Sanchi be again visited by an earthquake.

(8) The space between the railing and tope is paved with large radiating slabs of stones, which should be laid bare, and the covering earth all removed. The Buddhist figures should as far as possible be replaced in this position opposite the gateways. The steps recently built to the top of the plinth have a number of carved stones, which belong to the upper railing perhaps, and which should be removed. Fergusson's and Cunningham's illustrations show a double flight of stairs at the south gate, and these stairs should be restored.

(9) The small tope to the west might hereafter be repaired by filling in the hole and rebuilding the dome.

(10) The sculptures of the gateways of the Great Tope and of the small gateway near, also of the railing of the small tope to the west, should be thoroughly cleaned.

(11) All carved fragments the original position of which cannot be identified should be carefully collected together.

(12) The work of re-erecting the gateways is of paramount importance; but I hope you will find time to visit the topes in the neighbourhood at Andher, Bhojpur, Sonari, and Satdhara.

(13) Durga Singh, the draftsman, should be employed in making plans and drawings of all ornamental details at Sanchi and at the latter places, and his drawings should be forwarded to me at Simla as they are completed in pencil. The fairing out will be done hereafter.

(14) I hope to again visit Sanchi in March next to inspect the work. Meanwhile you will submit weekly reports of your operations.

23
9