

## FOREIGN DEPARTMENT NOTES.

INTERNAL—B, MAY 1906.

Nos. 378—379.

### ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE TOPES AT SANCHI IN BHOPAL. OBJECTION OF HER HIGHNESS THE BEGUM TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF BUDDHIST CHOWKIDARS. PROPOSAL TO APPOINT HINDUS OR NATIVE CHRISTIANS IN PREFERENCE TO MUHAMMADANS.

Dated Indore, the 9th October 1905.

From—The HON'BLE MAJOR H. DALY, C.S.J., C.I.E., Agent to the Governor-General in Central India,  
To—S. M. FRASER, Esq., C.I.E., Offg. Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department.

In a demi-official letter No. 1321, dated the 7th September 1905, Mr. Marshall, Director-General of Archaeology, wrote to the Political Agent in Bhopal stating that he had been in communication with the Malabodi Society, who had promised to find a Buddhist for the care of the Sanchi Topes. Mr. Marshall explained that a Buddhist might be expected to look after the sculptures with scrupulous care and that it was highly important to procure a reliable chowkidar or caretaker. He therefore asked the Political Agent whether the Durbar would be willing to provide suitable quarters and pay for the Buddhist chowkidar. He added that the Society were prepared to pay the man from their own funds anything that it seemed necessary to give in addition to pay from the Durbar.

On receiving this letter Luard wrote to me that Her Highness was already averse from keeping up the Sanchi Tope, as she felt that she was encouraging idol worship by doing so, and that to ask her to pay for a Buddhist priest or caretaker would be very unfair. When I was recently at Bhopal, Luard suggested that it might be well to ascertain from the Begum whether she would be prepared to hand over to us the whole Tope for us to manage as we like. I agreed to Luard's sounding the Begum with reference to this suggestion. Marshall, however, is of opinion that the Government of India would refuse to take over the monuments as a permanent charge, though they might be induced to make a grant-in-aid. Luard subsequently mentioned to Her Highness the suggestion in regard to a Buddhist caretaker. He says that she was horrified at the idea. She begged him to explain that the appointment of any such man would disgrace her in the eyes not only of her own people but of all Mussalmans in India; that she would willingly pay for all chowkidars herself, but that no Buddhist could be allowed to reside there. Luard said that the earnestness of her appeal to prevent this was unmistakeable.

It is impossible not to sympathise with Her Highness's feelings in the matter; but I am inclined to think that the best solution would be for us to take over the Tope (if she is willing to let us do so) giving her an assurance at the same time that we will not allow any Buddhist to be employed there. Perhaps His Excellency will kindly let me know his views in the matter during his visit to Indore, and I can then take an opportunity of speaking to the Begum about it.

Submitted with papers. Please see last paragraph of His Excellency's note\* of the 3rd May, and paragraph 3 of our letter No. 2569-I. B., dated the 3rd July 1905.

\* Internal B, August 1905, Nos. 421-422.

J. R. R.,—12-10-1905.

F. P. B.,—12-10-1905.

If the Begum is really averse, not only to a Buddhist caretaker, but even to keeping up the Tope, Major Daly's suggestion that Government should take it over might be seriously considered.

E. H. KEALY,—12-10-1905.

I cannot understand Major Daly's sympathy with the Begum in her very unreasonable attitude. In the first place a Buddhist is hardly an idolator, and, if he were, I cannot see why any Mahomedan ruler, who permits Hindus to worship idols in modern temples, should object to a non-Mahomedan caretaker for a religious ruin, not used now-a-days for purposes of worship. If Your Excellency agrees, I might keep the case to speak about it to Major Daly at Indore.

S. M. FRASER,—13-10-1905.

We will settle it there.

C[URZON],—15-10-1905.



I discussed this matter with Captain Luard at Bhopal. He explained that the objection of the Begum to the Buddhist caretaker—which he described as rooted and invincible—is due to the fear that like Mr. Dharmapala at Bodh-Gaya he will sooner or later introduce an image of Buddha for local worship, an innovation which her Mahomedan ideas induce her to regard with extreme repugnance.

There are, it seems to me, two alternatives :

- (1) while deferring to the Begum's views about the Buddhist, to insist upon the appointment of a larger number of chowkidars, \* to be paid by her, and also upon the erection of a small local building or Museum (this was discussed before, and I have a recollection of denouncing an awful design by Mr. Cousens while ordering the idea to be pursued) to contain the sculptured stones which are now liable to be sold or stolen. Captain Luard says that the Begum will probably meet us at once in both respects ;

- (2) in the event of her failing to do so to take over the custody of the Tope ourselves, a solution which would not be to the credit or the dignity of the State.

I suggest that after Mr. Marshall has seen, the Begum should be at once addressed.

C[URZON],—15-11-1905.

Director-General of Archæology.

The great difficulty will be to find Mahomedan chowkidars who can be relied upon not to deface or sell the images themselves. So far, they would appear to have done as much damage to the Topes as any one, and the more there are of them, the greater the danger will be. Even in our own Department we cannot trust our Mahomedan assistants not to destroy an "idol", when they have the opportunity, however priceless a relic it may be.

J. H. MARSHALL,—24-11-1905.

Foreign Department.

For orders—*vide* Lord Curzon's note and Mr. Marshall's note above. (I am not clear as to what we should now say to the Agent to the Governor-General.)

F. P. B.,—27-11-1905.

I do not know whether Hindu chowkidars might be less obnoxious to the Begum than Buddhists, and less hostile to the "idols" than Mahomedans, always supposing that they themselves would have no scruples about doing the work !

It looks as if we shall have to adopt the second alternative in Lord Curzon's note of 15th November and, as suggested by Major Daly in his letter dated 9th October 1905, take over the Tope. But even then I imagine there would be some difficulty about chowkidars, for Major Daly suggests a condition should be that no Buddhist should be employed.

E. H. KEALY,—28-11-1905.

I venture to think that it would on every ground be desirable that we should take over the Sanchi Tope and so relieve the Begum of the charge of to her so objectionable an erection. Have we any matter on hand in connection with the Bhopal State in the disposal of which we could effect an exchange of territory ? It was a pity that this matter was not settled before the Begum received her G.C.I.E.

L. W. DANE,—28-11-1905.

With reference to Secretary's question above, we have no case of the kind.

J. R. R.,—29-11-1905.

F. P. B.,—29-11-1905.

Home Department might perhaps now see with reference to the suggestion to take over the Tope.

E. H. KEALY,—30-11-1905.

L. W. DANE,—30-11-1905.

Home Department.

The Director-General of Archæology may see for favour of remarks in the first instance.

L. C.,—4-12-1905.

S. M.,—4-12-1905.



We may consult the Director-General. It is not clear that any question of an exchange of territory need arise. What I understand Lord Curzon to have contemplated was that we should with the consent of the Begum take charge of the Tope and select the chowkidars and also, perhaps, pay them. In our selection we should be restricted from employing any Buddhist by the assurance which it is proposed to give to the Begum on this point.

In the event of our taking charge of the Tope the question as to who shall bear the cost of its maintenance will arise. At present I gather that this is met by the Begum, and there seems to be no reason why she should not continue to do so. It has been fairly generally recognised by this time that Native States of whatever creed have a duty to perform in the matter of conserving ancient monuments in their territories.

H. G. STOKES,—5-12-1905.

I agree with Sir L. Dane that the best plan will probably be for us to take over the Tope. As I remember the place (I was there about five years ago) the area of land required will not be large and will be for the most part valueless for cultivation. If we take it over we must of course pay for maintenance. Director-General of Archæology may see.

H. H. RISLEY,—5-12-1905.

I agree. If the Begum consents to our taking over the care of the Sanchi Tope we ought certainly to pay for watching it. Of course we should employ Hindu caretakers. But I doubt whether the Begum will consent without much pressure, and this the Foreign Department may be unwilling to exert. We don't want to alienate the Begum's attachment over such a matter.

A. T. A[RUNDEL],—6-12-1905.

Director-General of Archæology.

In case they take the Topes over, the Government of India will have to pay, I imagine, not only for watching them, but for their repair and for the erection of the Museum which it is proposed to put up. Is this not a somewhat heavy charge to undertake merely because the Begum objects to Buddhist chowkidars? And are we not in danger of establishing an awkward precedent by thus relieving a Native State of all responsibility in the matter of conserving its ancient monuments? As far as my own Department is concerned, it would facilitate our work very much if the Topes were taken over by the Government of India, but I cannot help feeling that we should be letting ourselves in for an expenditure which should more properly be borne by the State, and that the policy upon which we are embarking might, in view of the limited funds at our disposal, tend to cripple our more legitimate work in British territory. These Topes are practically the only monuments of importance in Bhopal, and the Durbar might reasonably be expected to guarantee their effective protection. I must add that when I interviewed the Begum personally last year she expressed herself full of sympathy for the work that was being done at Sanchi.

J. H. MARSHALL,—12-12-1905.

Home Department.

I venture to think that there is much force in the considerations advanced by the Director-General at A in his note above.

It was for this reason that I suggested that even if we took over the Topes, the cost of maintenance should continue to be borne by the Bhopal Durbar.

H. G. STOKES,—20-12-1905.

Our only object is to secure the adequate conservation of what is probably one of the most remarkable Buddhist monuments in the world. If this can be attained through the agency of the Bhopal Durbar, so much the better. I am in entire sympathy with Mr. Marshall's solicitude for his grant which is small in relation to the work that has to be done. Foreign Department should see the case again.

H. H. RISLEY,—21-12-1905.

A. T. A[RUNDEL],—22-12-1905.

Foreign Department.

For orders with reference to Secretary's note dated the 28th November 1905.

R. E. HOLLAND,—29-12-1905.



I am quite unable to offer any suggestion for further action. Perhaps the Home Department after consulting Director-General of Archæology will put in the form of a draft what they want done about the Sanchi Tope.

L. W. DANE,—24-1-1906.

Home Department.

Director-General may be asked kindly to advise.

S. M.,—29-1-1906.

H. G. STOKES,—30-1-1906.

Director-General of Archæology.

I venture to think that the best course will be to put the matter first before the Darbar and hear what they have to say. They have done what they could, so far, for the Topes, and will no doubt do all they can to fall in with our wishes, if the present difficulties are explained to them. It might be pointed out that in spite of the solicitude shown by the Darbar for the Topes, the Muhammadan watchmen, to whom they have been entrusted, have not succeeded in effectually protecting them, and that, in view of the exceptional historic and artistic value of the Topes, it is important to secure that no further damage is done to the structures or to the fragments lying around them. That it is understood that there is some objection on the part of the Darbar to the employment of the Buddhist chowkidars advocated by me in my

\* Internal B, August 1905, Nos. 421-422.

note \* of 17th April 1905, and that, if this objection is insurmountable, it will be advisable

for the Darbar to employ either Hindus or Native Christians, since the rooted objection of Muhammadans to any iconic form of worship makes the preservation of these Topes distasteful to them.

That a possible solution of the difficulty would be for the Government of India to take over the Topes and maintain them at the expense of the Darbar; but that Government would be reluctant to relieve the Bhopal Darbar of a responsibility, which is willingly accepted by every other Native State in India, unless the effective protection of the Topes proved to be actually beyond the power of the Darbar.

It might, perhaps, be impressed upon the Begum that the Government of India has accepted the principle of preserving every class of ancient monuments in the country whether they belong to the Christian, Muhammadan, Hindu, or Buddhist creeds; and that it is reasonable to expect that the Native States will support the Government in the impartial attitude which it has taken up. And that, if the preservation of monuments was to be treated in a purely local or partial spirit, it would result in the destruction or decay of Muhammadan even more than of Hindu Memorials.

J. H. MARSHALL,—12-2-1906.

Home Department.

A draft, based on Director-General's note, is put up as desired by Foreign Department. The file may be returned to that Department.

S. M.,—1-3-1906.

I think that Foreign Department should first be asked whether they agree to the Darbar being approached on the lines of Mr. Marshall's note. The main points are—

- (1) that the Darbar should continue to pay for the keep of Chowkidars, etc., and the conservation of the building, but (2) that these should be selected by us. As the Begum objects to the appointment of Buddhists (not without reason, seeing that these would probably tend to start puja of sorts at the Tope) we might give an assurance that Hindus only would be selected and that no worship would be allowed of any sort. (3) If the Begum objects to (2), then she might be got to post Hindu, instead of Muhammadan watchmen.

H. G. STOKES,—3-3-1906.

H. H. RISLEY,—5-3-1906.

Foreign Department.

I think it would be inadvisable to put the suggestion about taking the Tope over until

I fully agree.

L. RUSSELL.

would very likely be distasteful to the Begum.

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this is absolutely necessary, but it might be kept in reserve. It would involve the Government of India in an awkward precedent, and of which may have reached Her Highness's ears, that the Government of India propose taking over part of her state.



2. I would also omit the portion of paragraph 4, about it being reasonable to expect the Native States to support Government in matters of this kind; as where religious scruples are concerned what is reasonable in one place might be most unreasonable in another.

The Begum, although she may be ready to do what she is asked, simply to please the Government of India, no doubt considers it hardly reasonable that she should be called upon to preserve what she regards as the relics of heathendom.

3. With these alterations the draft might issue.

V. GABRIEL,—12-4-1906.

I agree.

L. RUSSELL,—14-4-1906.

Issue.

L. W. DANE,—17-4-1906.

Pro. No. LETTER TO THE AGENT TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL IN CENTRAL INDIA, No. 1525-I.B.,  
378. DATED THE 23RD APRIL 1906.

*Communicates the views of the Government of India in regard to the arrangements for the preservation of the Sanchi Topes, and request that they may be placed before Her Highness the Begum of Bhopal as soon as an opportunity offers.*

Home Department.

Pro. No. ENDORSEMENT TO THE HOME DEPARTMENT, No. 1853-I.B., DATED THE 9TH MAY 1906.  
379. *Forwards a copy of Foreign Department letter No. 1525-I.B., dated the 23rd April 1906, for information.*