



A Case Study of Sanchi Stupa History in Madhya Pradesh

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Abstract

Sanchi stupa is a Buddhist monument dedicated to Mahatma Buddha. It is located in Raisen district M.P. It is also known as oldest stupa. It is one of the oldest stupas. This stupa is an example of Buddhist architecture from central India from Mauryan dynasty. The stupa is very ancient. From the epigraphical evidence Sanchi stupa has been built during the 2nd century B.C. by Ashoka. He built many stupas, chaitya and Vihara in Madhya Pradesh but Sanchi stupa is one of them. According to Sinhalese chronicles and few books, Ashoka's first wife was the daughter of a merchant of Vedisagiri (present – day Vidisha), Devi by name, whom Ashoka had married while he was Viceroy at Ujjain. She was the mother of two children of Ashoka. Mahendra and Sanghmitra. Both are important for the spread of Buddhism to other countries. Devi is also remembered for the Sanchi Stupa. The wife of Ashoka queen Devi and daughter Vidisha supervised the construction of this monument. Sanchi stupa is one of the oldest and beautiful stupa architecture. It is not only Madhya Pradesh but also across the India.

Keywords: History, Development, art and architecture and importance.

Introduction

The foundation of the Sanchi stupa was laid by one of the greatest emperors of India, Ashoka, the instigator of the Maurya dynasty. He commissioned the inception of stupas to redistribute the mortal remains of Mahatma Gautam Buddha in the 3rd century B.C.E. This huge hemispherical dome is 54 ft. high, comprising of a central chamber where the relics of Buddha have been placed. The hemispherical edifice of present – day Sanchi Stupa is double in diameter. The wife of Ashoka queen Devi and their daughter Vidisha supervised the construction of this monument. A sandstone pillar that has the inscriptions of schism edict by Ashoka along with ornated spiral Brahmi characters resembling conch shells referred to 'shankh lipi' was also established in the site. The lower portion of the Sanchi Stupa architecture is still grounded, whereas the upper portions are kept under a canopy called chattra.

Pushyamitra shunga, the general of the Mauryan empire killed Brihadratha Mauryan, the last Mauryan empire killed Brihadratha Mauryan, the last Mauryan Emperor in 185 BCE. and established the shunga dynasty. It is believed that the stupa was destroyed during the second century BCE. the period when Shunga Dynasty came into power. Later it was reconstructed by his son Agnimitra. During the reign of the Shunga dynasty the expansion of the stupa was nearly doubled than its original size. This time a flattened dome was constructed using stone slabs that covered the actual brick stupa. The dome is crowned by three superimposed umbrella – like structures which symbolize the wheel of Law 'that's Dharma. The seat of the dome is a high rounded drum that can be reached through a double stairca.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are:

- 1) To find out the aesthetic and cultural style of Sanchi stupa
- 2) To clarify and broaden the existing Knowledge on the architecture of stupa.

- 3) To provide a precise and clear document and report on significant stupa of Sanchi, district Raisen for further studies and application.

Sanchi Stupa History:

Sanchi stupa is a Buddhist complex, famous for its Great Stupa, on a hilltop at Sanchi town in Raisen District of the state of Madhya Pradesh, Located 46 km. north – east of Bhopal, the capital city of Madhya Pradesh, India.

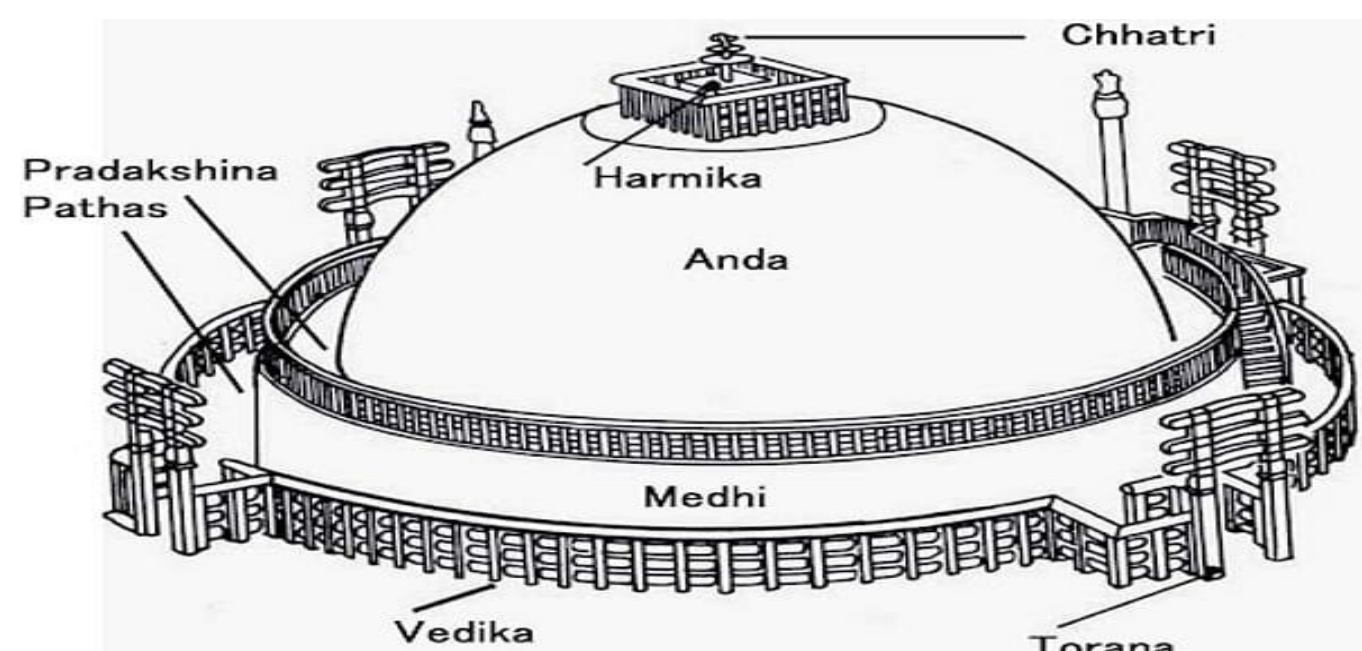
It was originally commissioned by the emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE. Its nucleus was a simple hemispherical brick structure built over the relics of the Buddha.

Going by the Indian, Sanskrit – language text titled 'Ashokavadana' assumptions crop up that the stupa was probably destroyed during the 12th century CE, an incident which many believe to be associated with the rise of the power of Pushyamitra.

In 1818, the existence of the Sanchi Stupa was documented in English by a British officer named General Taylor.

Sir John Hubert Marshall who served as the Director General of the 'Archaeological Survey of India' (ASI) from 1902 – 1928 supervised the restoration work of the Stupa between 1912.

Sanchi Stupa Architecture:



The Buddhist architecture is dedicated to different aspects of Buddha's life. During the reign of Ashoka,

was widely preached and was spread to a larger part of India extending it to Sri Lanka. Ashoka

Architecture. During his reign many stupas and pillars were built commemorating Buddha. Amongst all the monuments of the world, the stupa has the Largest uninterrupted historical development spanning more than three millenniums. In India all most all the early structural stupas were in ruins, most of which were destroyed in due course of time by weather and treasure hunters or have lost its original shape due to subsequent renovations, making it difficult to describe the shape of the earliest stupas, For this one has to fall back on sculptural representations of them in order to form a correct idea of their appearance when complete; fortunately there are plenty of materials for this purpose. There are three parts of it;

1. The base or drum.
2. The dome (Anda) which resting on the drum, demarcating a terrace called Medhi and in Ceylon, Pupphaddhana, a pali word meaning “place for depositing flowers”. The relics are kept in the hollow space in the interior of the dome of the stupa. The relic casket is generally made of precious metal in the shape of a miniature stupa.
3. The upper part is made up of a square structure called harmika (Pavillion), into which the shaft (Yupa) bearing the umbrellas (chhatra) is inserted. the term harmika is not available in the Mahavamsa, and this part of the stupa is called devata Kotuwa “citadel of Gods.

Materials and method of the study

To obtain the research objectives, a quantitative approach was used to collect their relevant data, associated the architectural observation about Sanchi. The way of research method was comprised of four steps.

As the first step, data collection was made by field survey, took photos and asked questionnaires about the stupas. Field survey included measure works and observation. The data was recorded using digital images, sketches and brief interviews about selected stupa. Data collection for the site plan implies with identifying and asking the location of elements in compound are also taken.

As the third step, study the compound of the stupa, its access way and main stupa. the main stupa is divided into three fundamental portions: 1) Medhi portion – consists of plinth and terraces, 2) Anda portion - consists of bell rest and bell shape dome, 3) Sakawali – consists of the spires, lotus petals, the banana bud, and the umbrella. Above three portions were studied on their form composition base on their plan shape, and proportion base on their overall width and height.

Moreover, the study was made visual connectivity and decorative elements of the stupa. Finally, summarise the studied results and conclude on the architecture of selected stupa.

Fig ...



Some interesting facts About the Sanchi Stupa

It is so called about the Sanchi Stupa, its lure history lovers from across the globe. From its inception till the present day the great stupa endured numerous modifications. some interesting facts:

1. Sanchi stupa was commissioned by emperor Ashoka and supervised by his Queen Devi and daughter Vidisha. After the emperor accepted Buddhism, he built the first Stupa at Sanchi.
2. Sanchi stupa remained deserted and undiscovered from the 14th century until the year 1818 when General Taylor rediscovered the site.
3. Sir John Marshall established an archaeological museum here in 1919, which is today known as Sanchi museum.

4. The pillar of Sanchi stupa has an Ashoka 's inscription called schism Edict. It also has an inscription in the ornamental Shankha Lipi from the Gupta period.
5. It is the oldest stone structure in India.
6. It has a large number of Brahmi Inscriptions.
7. Currently, this stupa is 36.5 m. in diameter and 21.64 m. high.
8. The place, however Lord Buddha never visited this place.
9. The famous Ashoka pillar comprising of four lions is also found in Sanchi. These pillars are constructed in a Greco – Buddhist style.
10. Sanchi stupa architecture was declared as the world heritage in the year 1989.

Architectural study of Sanchi stupa

Emperor Ashoka was built in 2nd century B.C. Emperor Ashoka of the Mauryan dynasty. After Mahatma Buddha's death Buddhism spread to different parts of the world. During his reign Ashoka many stupas and pillars were built commemorating Buddha. The Buddhist architecture is dedicated to different aspects of Buddha's life. During the reign of Ashoka, Buddhism was spread to a larger part of India extending it to Sri Lanka. Ashoka was a great patron of Buddhist architecture.

Buddhist art and architecture made a substantial contribution to the Indian culture. These arts and architecture made a substantial contribution to the Indian culture. These arts and architecture are present in the form of Stupas, Viharas, chaityas, Paintings and pillars. There are mainly three main stupas on the top of the Sanchi hill which rise about 100 m. above the plain. It is the biggest one stupa of the another stupa. Its nucleus was a simple hemispherical brick structure built over the relics of the Buddha. It was crowned by Chhatra, a parasol-like structure symbolizing high rank, which was intended to honour and shelter the relics. It has four profusely carved ornamental gateways and a balustrade encircling the whole structure. The dome of this stupa is a solid brick-work almost 32.32m in diameter and 12.8m high. Its dome has a slight surmounting by Harmika with a central triple Umbrella. The facing of the dome consists of dry masonry composed of hammer dressed stones laid in even courses. The terrace 4.87m high from ground was added thus creating a separate and upper ambulatory passage 1.8 m wide access to which was provided by a double staircase. There are four gateways known as Toranas at the cardinal points to the compass and are slightly staggered from the railing enclosing stupa. The ambulatory or Pradakshina path is fenced by railing 3.35 m high all around the stupa. Outside the railing there once stood the famous pillar of Ashoka, the fragments of which are noticed now to the right of southern Torana. The entrance of the Toranas to the ambulatory were accepted as the traditional type of ceremonial portals and excel the array of architectural embellishment. Torana consists of two square upright columns with capital of lion or elephant heads denoting strength. These columns support three separate horizontal panels between each of which is a row of ornamental balusters. These panels are supported by atlantean figures, a group of dwarfs, lions and elephants. The total height of this erection is somewhat 10.36m with a width of 3 m. The Vedic railing consists of upright octagonal plan 45 cm in diameter spaced at 60 to 90cm from each other and connected by three lens shaped horizontals called 'suchi' or needless 60 cm. deep being threaded through the holes of the upright. The top horizontal bar is provided with coping to drain out rain water. Many of the things similar from Amravati stupa.

Connectivity

Sanchi was the centre for the monuments of many religions. It was famous for stupa which was built by Ashoka. Some of its parts were ruined during the excavation by Archaeologists. During 1st B.C. its four gateways were built. The models of that gateways might be made in wood before the construction of stone gateways were built. The models of that gateways might be made in wood before the construction of stone – gateways. They have beautiful sculptural arts with high technical skill. The says about the life History of Buddha.

Decorative elements

The stupa is decorated with

Conclusion

In this paper , I analysed” A case study of Sanchi Stupa history in Madhya Pradesh ”from the ancient period to the Present day . The study investigates how developed here Buddhist monument . Whereas Buddha never came in Madhya Pradesh .In spite of this Many Stupa built here but Sanchi Stupa is one

of them. A History of Sanchi Stupa in Madhya Pradesh from the 2nd century B. C. The district of Raisen is high class in the world heritage especially for Archaeological sites . The scholars from different parts of the country as well as from different parts of world come to Raisen district for the Buddhist study .

The Sanchi is a historical place . The Sanchi is situated about 10 km . far away from Vidisha . It is located north-west of Vidisha in Madhya Pradesh . India .

Sanchi stupa is one of the significant stupas in Raisen . This stupa represented Ashoka who was the emperor of Mauryan dynasty.

Recommendations

In this research Paper , the study includes from composition , proportion and special connecting spaces of the selected stupa . The architecture of this study is perceived not only as cultural symbol but also as the beauty of the composition . Therefore , it is recommended that the balancing proportion of 1:1 and the dynamical and harmonious composition should be considered to use in the designing of Sanchi Stupa . Besides this , it is also recommended that the explicit document and report on Sanchi stupa and Kolkata museum can be used as record and reference for further studies and application .

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