



National Museum New Delhi

History

The National Museum, New Delhi, as we see it today, has an interesting beginning. The blueprint for establishing the National Museum in Delhi was prepared by the Maurice Gwyer Committee in May 1946. An Exhibition of Indian Art, consisting of selected artefacts from various museums of India was organized by the Royal Academy, London with the cooperation of Government of India and Britain. The Exhibition went on display in the galleries of Burlington House, London during the winter months of 1947-48. It was decided to display the same collection in Delhi, before the return of exhibits to their respective museums. An exhibition was organized in the the Rashtrapati Bhawan (President's residence), New Delhi in 1949, which turned out to be a great success. This event proved responsible for the creation of the National Museum.

The success of this Exhibition led to the idea that advantage should be taken of this magnificent collection to build up the nucleus collection of the National Museum. State Governments, Museum authorities and private donors, who had participated in the exhibition, were approached for the gift or loan of artefacts, and most of them responded generously.

On August 15, 1949, the National Museum, New Delhi, was inaugurated in the Rashtrapati Bhawan by Shri R.C. Rajagopalachari, the Governor-General of India. The foundation of the present building was laid by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, on May 12, 1955. The first phase of the National Museum building was formally inaugurated by Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the Vice President of India, on December 18, 1960. The second phase of the building was completed in 1989.

While the Museum continued to grow its collection through gifts that were sought painstakingly, artefacts were collected through its Arts Purchase Committee. The Museum presently holds approximately 2,000,000 objects of diverse nature, both Indian as well as foreign, and its holdings cover a time span of more than five thousand years of Indian cultural heritage.

The National Museum was initially looked after by the Director General of Archaeology until 1957, when the Ministry of Education, Government of India, declared it a separate institution and placed it under its own direct control. At present, the National Museum is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

Source: <http://www.nationalmuseumindia.gov.in/en/history>



Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya

'The Museum of Western India composition. The real reason why it is so, is because it was instructed that the design should be Indian in character.' - George Wittet

Founded in the early 1900s, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya is one of the premier cultural institutions in the country. On 14th August 1905, a number of prominent people of Bombay gathered at the Town Hall and resolved to erect a Memorial to the visit of the Prince of Wales (later King George V) in the form of a public Museum which, would be named after him. The meeting was attended by Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Justice Badrudin Tyabji, Narotamdas Gokuldas, Justice Chandavarkar, Sassoon J. David and many other dignitaries known for their outstanding contribution in their respective fields and also in the development of the island of Bombay. The Foundation Stone of the Museum was laid by the Prince of Wales on 11th November 1905 and the Museum was named Prince of Wales Museum of Western India. For a long time people had also felt the need for a good museum in the city and finally the museum was established by the public contribution aided by the then Government of the Bombay Presidency.

This memorial in the form of a museum was to be erected on the plot of land known as the Crescent Site on the southern tip of the island. The building was completed in 1914 but it opened to the public much later on 10th January, 1922. Until then it was used by the military as a hospital and for Children's Welfare Exhibitions. Many things have changed since then. Bombay is now known as Mumbai and the name of the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India is changed to the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya. Set against a well laid out garden which retains its original plan even today, the museum is an important Heritage building of the city. It is a Grade I Heritage Building of the city and is set in a well laid out garden which retains its original plan. It has been awarded first place for Heritage Building Maintenance by the Indian Heritage Society. The architect of the building, George Wittet, was selected after an open competition in 1909. Wittet is known for the Indo-Saracenic style of architecture of which this museum is one of the best examples. The Indo-Saracenic style combines Hindu and Saracenic architectural forms, at times incorporating some elements of Western architecture. The Indian pillared hall, the arched pavilion, the dome rising above the huge intersecting arches forming a beautiful geometrical pattern-all these together make the Museum building a typical example of the Indo-Saracenic style. Small jalis for light and wind add to the grandeur of the building. George Wittet skilfully incorporated the original wooden arched pavilion purchased from a royal house (wada) at Nasik in Maharashtra, as a circular railing on the first floor of the building. The dome of this building is designed after the Gol Gumbaz of Bijapur and the finial is copied from the Taj at Agra. Today, CSMVS houses about 50,000 artefacts and has an outstanding collection comprising of sculptures, terracotta's, bronzes, excavated artefacts from the Harappan sites, Indian miniature paintings, European paintings, porcelain and ivories from China and Japan, etc. Besides these, the Museum has a separate Natural History section.

Source: <http://www.csmvs.in/about-us/history>