

LESSON No. 26



OUR MONUMENTS

There are many monuments across the world.
Then, what is a monument ?

In short, a monument is a famous place or building or structure that is preserved because of its historical and cultural importance.

A monument is a relic of the past. Our monuments tell us about our past glory. We can know our past tradition, culture and life from the monuments.

What is a monument ?

What can be known from monuments ?

Like other places, we have many monuments in Manipur also. Let's now know some of our monuments.

Kangla : The Kangla is situated at the heart of Imphal, the capital of Manipur. It was the capital of the kingdom of Manipur.



Western gate of Kangla

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Nongda Lairen Pakhangba who ascended the throne in 33 AD ruled from the Kangla. It is also known as the royal palace. The British called it “**the Kangla Fort**”, because it was fortified on all sides by walls. It was surrounded by waters also. There were moats on the north, the west and the south, like the present Kangla moats. They are known as the Thangapats. The Imphal River guards the Kangla on the east. It had four main gates.

The Kangla was the administrative headquarters of the Kingdom of Manipur. It is a sacred place. There are many sacred places inside the Kangla.

Almost all the ruins and relics of Kangla have now been restored to their original forms and structures.

Where is the Kangla ?

Why did the British call the Kangla as a “fort”?

Briefly define the Kangla.

Make a visit to the Kangla and tell what you feel to your parents.

The Langthabal Palace (Konung) :-

Langthabal is about 8 Kms. away from Imphal on the south. The name of Langthabal was changed to Canchipur (Kanchipur) during the reign of Meidingu Khagemba. The place is still known by both the names.

There is a hillock at Canchipur, near Manipur University. You will find some brick structures and dilapidated buildings on the said hillock.



Langthabal Palace

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They are the remains of the Langthabal Palace (Konung). It was the administrative headquarters or capital of the Kingdom of Manipur during the reigns of Bhagyachandra and Gambhir Singh. Chandrakirti also ruled from this capital for 4 months before shifting his palace to the Kangla. Maharaja Churachand Singh built his summer palace at the Langthabal Konung in 1907.

The government of Manipur is planning to restore the Langthabal Konung(Palace) to its past glory.

Where is the Langthabal Konung (Palace) ? State its importance in the history of Manipur.

Where was the Ras Leela dance performed for the first time ?

Who built a summer palace at Langthabal?

In India there are many monuments. Let us know some of the important monuments.

The Victoria Memorial :

There is a beautiful museum called the Victoria Memorial at Kolkata, the capital of West Bengal. It is also Known as the Victoria Memorial Hall. It was built by the British and opened as a Museum in 1921.



Victoria Memorial

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There are a musical grandfather clock and Queen Victoria's rose wood piano with its desk in the said museum.

There are many books, portraits, statues, etc. in the 25 galleries of the museum.

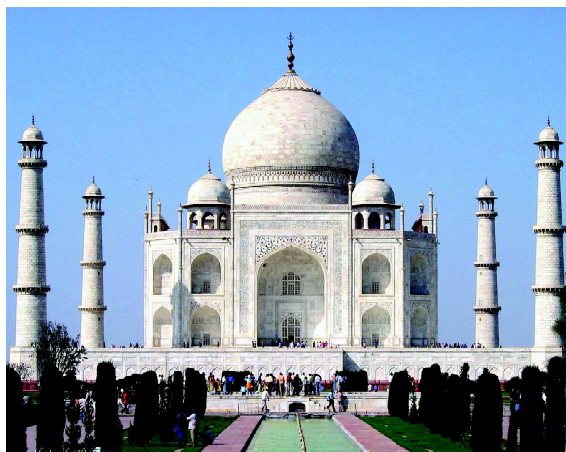
Briefly describe the Victoria Memorial Hall or Museum.

Mention the important items which are exhibited in the Victoria Memorial Museum.

The Taj Mahal :

Have you seen the picture of Taj Mahal or have you visited Agra ?

The Taj Mahal is at Agra, a city of Uttar Pradesh. It was built of white marble by the Mughal Emperor, Shah Jahan. He built it in the memory of his queen, Mumtaz.



The Taj Mahal

It is one of the most beautiful buildings of the world.

Construction of the Taj Mahal was started in 1632 and it took 22 years in its completion. Everyday, many people from different parts of the world come to Agra to see the famous Taj Mahal.

Where is the Taj Mahal ? Who and why was it built ?

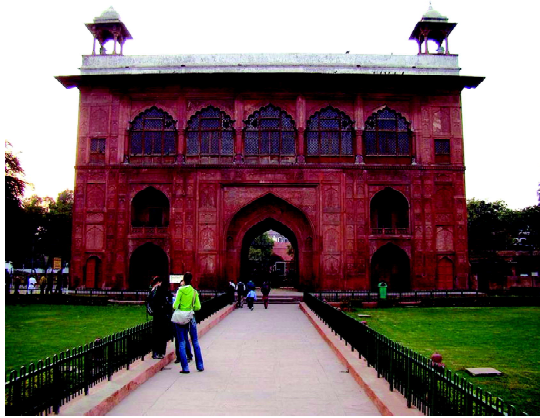
How much time did the construction of the Taj Mahal take?

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The Red Fort :

You might have seen the picture of the Red Fort. It is at Delhi, the capital of India.

It was built by the Mughal Emperor, Shah Jahan as his capital. The construction of Red Fort began on the 9th of April, 1639. It took nine years, two months and some days in its completion. It was the capital of the Mughal Empire till 1857. The Red Fort has six gateways. There are many buildings and gardens inside the Red Fort.



The Red Fort

On the 15th August, 1947 Jawaharlal Nehru stood on the bastion of the Red Fort to deliver the historic speech of announcing India's independence. The forecourt of the Red Fort continues to be used on the two most important national events of India, namely the Independence Day Celebrations on the 15th of August and on the 26th January, where the Republic Day Parade ends here.

Where is the Red Fort?

How much time did the construction of the Red Fort take?

Who built the Red Fort ? Why was it built?

Why is the Red Fort so important in the history of India?

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We have read about some important monuments in the above pages. Now, let's know about two historical personalities, one who built and lived at the Langthabal Konung (Palace) and the other who built the Taj Mahal.

Rajarshi Bhagyachandra

Meidingu Jai Singh, who is better known as Rajarshi Bhagyachandra ascended the throne of Manipur in 1759. His other names are Karta and Chingthang Khomba . He was born in 1748.

Meidingu Bhagyachandra was a staunch “Vaishnav”. He abdicated the throne in 1762 when a Brahmin was killed by his servants. He did so to atone the murder. But he became the king of Manipur again and ruled till 1798.

The reign of Bhagyachandra witnessed many internal and external disturbances. The Burmese invaded Manipur three times during his regime. He established good relations with the Ahoms of Assam and the British.

However, the name of Bhagyachandra is more remembered as a religious, cultural and social reformer. No doubt, he was one of the greatest kings of Manipur.

He introduced the Manipuri era called the “Kangleipak Cheichat” in 1760.

According to the era, a calender which was 971 years in 1760 had been prepared. The era began in 789 A.D. i.e. $1760 - 971 = 789$. This era is known as the “Chandrabda” or “Manipurabda” also. He also encouraged the Hindu astrology.

Bhagyachandra took keen interest in the propagation of Vaishnavism. In Fact, it was during his regime that the Chaitanya's Vaishnavism became very popular in Manipur Valley.

The idols of Govindajee, Bijoy Govinda, Abdaita and Gopinath were made from a jackfruit acquired from the Kaina Hill on the east of Manipur Valley. The idol of Govindajee was formally installed with rituals at the

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Langthabal Konung (Palace) in November, 1779. The installation ceremony is a remarkable epoch in the history of Manipur as the famous “ Ras Leela” (Maha Ras Dance) was performed for the first time in this occasion. The Ras Leela was continued for five consecutive nights. Meidingu Jai Singh came to be known as Bhagyachandra after the installation of the Govindajee’s idol at its temple at the Langthabal Konung (Palace).



Bhagyachandra and the Ras leela.

Bhagyachandra encouraged Manipuri Literature also. No doubt, all the writings of his time were greatly influenced by the then Bengali literature and its language.

He was a great patron of dance music and various art forms. The “Sankirtana” was also introduced by him. The social, religious and cultural fabrics of Manipur were Sanskritised by Bhagyachandra very extensively.

Rajarshi Bhagyachandra set off for a pilgrimage to Brindaban (Vrindaban) in 1798. He breathed his last at Murshidabad in West Bengal in October, 1798.

What are the other names of Rajarshi Bhagyachandra?

Why did Bhagyachandra abdicate the throne?

Who introduced the “Sankirtana” in Manipur?

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Shah Jahan :

Prince Khurram, the original name of Shah Jahan, was born on the 5th of January, 1592 at Lahore (in modern Pakistan). His father was the Mughal Emperor, Jahangir and his mother was Jodha Bai(Jagat Gosain). Shah Jahan studied Persian, Turki and Hindi literatures. He also studied history, politics, theology, geography, physical education, etc. He was an efficient rider, a skilled swordsman and a confident archer. Above all, he was a very capable general.

Shah Jahan ascended the Mughal throne in 1627 and ruled upto 1658. He fought and won many wars and battles. Some modern historians opine that peace and prosperity prevailed during his regime and his period of rule was a golden age of the Mughal Period of Indian history.



Shah Jahan

Shah Jahan had many qualities. He was gentle, benevolent and cultured. He was a lover of arts and literature. He provided patronage to the artists and men of letters. Architecture reached its zenith during his reign. Not only the Taj Mahal, he built many beautiful buildings at Agra.

**Explain the contributions of Shah Jahan in the history of India.
Mention the qualities of Shah Jahan.**