

B.B. LAL  
CLASSIFICATION OF MONUMENTS  
OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE,  
MONUMENTS WHICH MAY BE LOOKED UPON  
AS THE COMMON HUMAN HERITAGE  
AND THUS BE ELIGIBLE FOR  
INTERNATIONAL AID.

Colleagues,

I am indeed highly obliged to the organizers of the Second International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historical Monuments, and, in particular, to Signor Pietro Gazzola, for the great honour done to my country and to myself in asking me to act as the Chairman of the Fifth Section of the Congress. This honour is so great that I feel completely overwhelmed by it, and, in the few words that I can muster at this moment, I can only say that this noble gesture of the organizers will be as greatly appreciated by my countrymen, as it is by me. It will indeed be looked upon as one of the piers — howsoever trivial it might appear to be at the moment — that are being erected on every possible occasion for the bridging of the “gap” between the East and the West. This Congress, therefore, will not only help in the understanding of monuments, but will itself be a monument to mutual understanding.

We, in this Section, are concerned with the study of measures that we ought to take for the safeguard of our monumental patrimony where the same might be endangered by our public works. “We” and “our” here require some deeper thinking. As descendants of the master-builders, we claim, and rightly too, to be the creators of these monuments. As authorities responsible for the execution of various development-schemes, such as dams, hydroelectric projects, highway-constructions, etc., we ourselves become the destroyers (at least potential ones) of this patrimony. And now, as members of this Congress and by virtue of our profession, we are thinking out ways and means of preserving the endangered monuments. In a nutshell, we ourselves have acted and are going to act in the triple capacities of the creator, the (potential) destroyer and the preserver. The problem, therefore, is essentially one of our own making and unless we create a balance within our own selves, I am afraid, we are not going to find a lasting solution. Human beings have, therefore, to develop, on the individual, national and international planes, a consciousness by which an abiding balance might be struck amongst the aforesaid three aspects, viz. those of creation, destruction and preservation. Though it might appear to be somewhat out of place, I cannot help bringing to your notice at this juncture the Hindu conception of God, in which He is represented as a Trinity, each facet being symbolic of one of these three aspects. Thus, humanity must rise to a godly level — or at least make an effort in that direction — and learn to have an overall and sympathetic view of things rather than be carried away by a one-sided view which is often bound to be narrow and unsympathetic. Let the potential destroyer realize that he himself,

through his forefathers, is responsible for the creation of these monuments and it is as much his duty to extend his protecting hand over the monuments as it is of the professional archaeologist and allied technician. At the same time, let the professional archaeologist also understand that all that is old need not necessarily be worth protecting and thus he too should learn to loosen his grips and let unimportant monuments be sacrificed, if need be so, for the sake of improving the lot of the suffering humanity, which is the ultimate aim of projects like dams, hydroelectric stations, etc. It is indeed a matter of give and take and one must learn to give before one should expect to get!

Thus, the first obvious step should be to foster in the common man an understanding of and appreciation for the monumental patrimony. Once this is done, half the battle is won; for, understanding and appreciation lead to love to care. Who is there who does not take care of what he or she loves?

The basic problem, therefore, is that of creating a real understanding of and appreciation for the monumental patrimony. And, as is well known, ignorance begets indifference, while knowledge leads to understanding. In making, therefore, the public at large monument-conscious, dissemination of the knowledge of monuments is the first and foremost requisite. For this, all kinds of audio-visual media should be employed. Here one might well remember the point that it is the school-going children whose wet clay can bear a lasting impression. And it is they who are going to control the destinies tomorrow. Thus, if we are able to inculcate in our children a real love for the heritage, problems like the ones we are facing now might automatically lessen, if not disappear.

In this context, one is glad to note that UNESCO has launched a world-wide campaign for the purpose. Let it be our solemn duty to contribute our mite to it and see that the objective is achieved in our respective countries.

Now, while monument-consciousness will no doubt go a long way in the lessening of our problems, it would be wrong to leave matters at that. In the first place, the desired consciousness will take at least a generation to grow. Secondly, it is quite likely that in spite of a real love for monumental patrimony there may still be genuine cases where even important monuments may have to be sacrificed for the sake of certain absolutely essential development-schemes. It is to such cases that we in this Section must give our thoughts. I have quite a few ideas in my mind:

— Classification of monuments of international importance — monuments which may be looked upon as the common human heritage and thus be eligible for international aid;

— Creation of an international salvage-fund under the auspices of UNESCO;

— Establishment of an international pool of technicians, operating preferably, again, under the wings of UNESCO;

and,

— Evolving of an International Convention under which may be laid down certain obligations on the Public Works authorities, such as the association, right from the beginning, of archaeological authorities with schemes relating to the construction of dams, highways, etc., and the provision of funds for archaeological salvage-operations in the projects themselves.

Some of these ideas have already been mooted on previous occasions. And, I am sure, each one of you also has certain ideas to give. Let us then get down to the task and evolve ways and means for an enduring solution of the problem.

**B. B. LAL**  
**CLASSEMENT PAR CATEGORIE DES MONUMENTS**  
**D'IMPORTANCE INTERNATIONALE, C'EST-A-DIRE DES MONUMENTS**  
**QUI PEUVENT ETRE CONSIDERES COMME UN HERITAGE COMMUN**  
**ET PEUVENT DONC ETRE SUSCEPTIBLES DES BENEFICIER**  
**D'UNE AIDE INTERNATIONALE.**  
**DISCOURS PRESIDENTIEL.**  
**RÉSUMÉ.**

*Après avoir remercié les organisateurs du Congrès qui l'ont appelé à faire fonction de Président de la Ve Section, Mr. B.B. Lal a dit que le premier pas à faire était celui d'encourager chez l'homme de la rue la compréhension et l'appréciation de notre patrimoine monumental. Inculquer cette « conscience du monument » aux enfants qui vont à l'école, ajoute Mr. Lal, pourrait être notre principal but, parce que, en premier lieu, ils représentent un terrain favorable qui peut conserver une impression durable et parce que, aussi, ce sont les enfants d'aujourd'hui qui auront le contrôle des destinées de demain.*

*Cependant, observe Mr. Lal, il peut exister néanmoins des cas où les monuments doivent être sacrifiés en vue de certains projets essentiels de développement. Afin de s'intéresser à de tels cas en connaissance de cause, Mr. Lal suggère les mesures suivantes:*

*— Classement par catégorie des monuments d'importance internationale, c'est-à-dire des monuments qui peuvent être considérés comme un héritage commun et peuvent donc être susceptibles de bénéficier d'une aide internationale,*

*— Création d'un fonds de secours international, sous les auspices de l'U.N.E.S.C.O.,*

*— Institution d'un pool international de techniciens, spécialistes de préférence, toujours sous le patronage de l'U.N.E.S.C.O., et,*

*— Elaboration d'une convention internationale comportant certaines obligations pour les Travaux Publics, comme l'Association, en place dès le début, de spécialistes en archéologie, avec schémas relatifs à la construction de digues, grandes routes, etc... et l'indication de la provision de fonds pour les opérations de sauvetage archéologique sur les projets eux-mêmes.*