



## Ancient Buddhist Sites in Afghanistan

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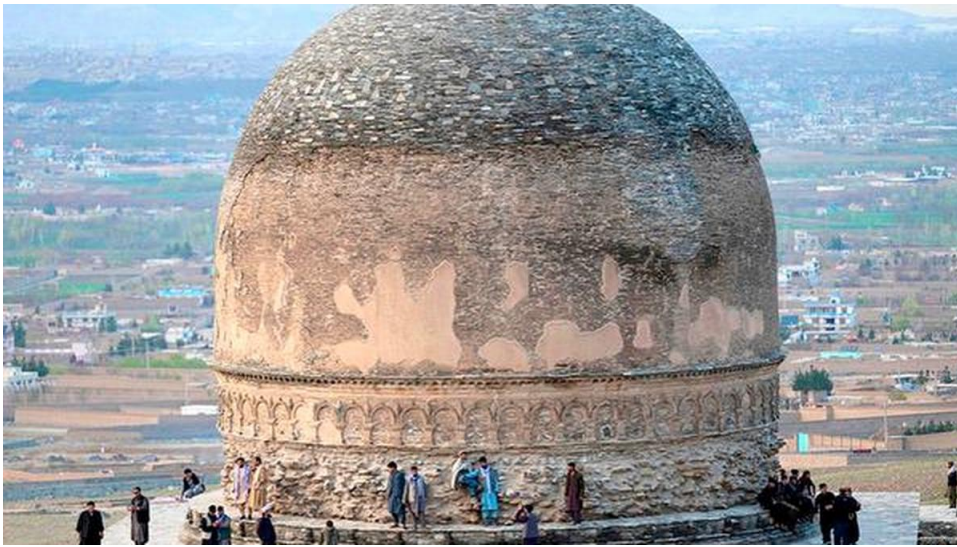
The **Taliban**, once infamous for **destroying historical artifacts** like the [Buddhas of Bamiyan](#) in 2001, now claim to support the **preservation of Afghanistan's ancient heritage sites**.

### Key Buddhist Sites

- **Mes Aynak:** [Mes Aynak](#) (in Logar province) is a major **Buddhist archaeological site** discovered in 1963. Occupied from the 1st century BC to the 10th century AD, it includes **monasteries, stupas, a Zoroastrian fire temple, a mint, copper smelting workshops**, and over **1,000 Buddhist statues**, frescoes, and coins.
  - Its **art reflects Hellenistic, Indian, Persian, and Chinese influences**. Situated on the [Silk Road](#), it played a key role in **spreading Buddhism from India to China**.



- **Shewaki Stupa:** The **Shewaki Stupa of Kabul** is over **20 meters wide** and is a major **Buddhist-era monument from the 1st to 3rd centuries AD**.
  - It **reflects both Kushan and Hellenistic architectural styles** (influenced by Greek culture) and was built with **fieldstones, mud, and plaster**.
  - The stupa, once a key religious and caravan site, was **first excavated in 1820 by archaeologists**.



- **Bamiyan Buddhas:** The 6th century **Bamiyan Buddhas** were **two massive statues**, carved into **sandstone cliffs** in **central Afghanistan**.
  - They belong to [Gandharan Buddhist art](#) and reflected **Buddhism's** cultural influence from the **1<sup>st</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries**.



- **Kushan-era Inscriptions:** In **Laghman Province**, archaeologists discovered **2,000-year-old** [Kushan](#)-era rock niches, [Brahmi inscriptions](#), and **winemaking tools**, highlighting the empire's vast reach from the [Gobi Desert](#) to the **Ganga Valley**.





**Read More: [Bamiyan Buddhas](#) , [India's Engagement with Taliban](#)**

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