

THEIR THROATS WERE CONSTRICTED: NATIONALISM, HISTORY,
AND MEMORIALS IN NANA RAO PARK

by

SARAH E. GRISWOLD

MICHAEL J. ALTMAN, COMMITTEE CHAIR

HILARY N. GREEN

STEVEN RAMEY

VAIA TOUNA

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

In the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, Nana Rao Park in Kanpur is a microcosm for the history of India since 1857. The park exists as a space to be used for recreation, but it also houses a group of memorials that work to reinforce certain narratives. Today, the memorials tell the story of the 1857 Rebellion through the lens of Indian nationalism. Before Indian Independence in 1947, however, the park operated as a space to ideologically reinforce British imperialism. Each iteration of this park both reflects and perpetuates the dominant narrative at any given time. This thesis examines Nana Rao Park through those memorials and contemporaneous scholarship to show that narratives and the material output of those narratives are always politically driven. Whether to establish empire or fight for a national identity, Nana Rao Park is a space where these ideologies and narratives collide.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my colleagues and friends in the Religion in Culture MA program – Sierra Lawson, Emma Gibson, and Matthew McCullough. Without their kindness and support, I would still be staring blankly at page one.

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THEIR THROATS WERE CONSTRICTED



Figure 1: Boodha Bargad. Courtesy of Dainik Bhaskar.

Tucked away in Nana Rao Park in Kanpur, India, stands a monolith (see fig. 1) engraved with a poem. The poem describes human suffering told from the perspective of a banyan tree. The tree this monument represents no longer stands, but the historical narratives assigned to it remain today. The banyan tree monument, known as Boodha Bargad, and the other sites of commemoration in the park tell a particular story about the events of 1857 which have gone by several names since – Sepoy Mutiny, First Freedom Struggle, Great Rebellion, to name a few. Beginning in May 1857, Indian soldiers in the British East India Company's army, called sepoys, began a widespread uprising against the company, which had steadily been establishing more control over land and commerce in the subcontinent. This uprising was a major attempt by Indian

natives to regain control from the British. Today, Nana Rao Park presents a particular group of narratives that fits one perspective of the 1857 Rebellion.¹ Prior to Indian Independence in 1947, however, the park – at the time called the Memorial Well Gardens – presented a very different perspective. Broadly, these narratives about the 1857 Rebellion fall into two distinct and opposing categories, both of which point back to the banyan tree that once stood.

Britons told and authorized the first group of narratives that arose during their colonial reign in India. In this perspective, the British and rebelling sepoys reached an agreement in Cawnpore² and the British were to be granted safe passage to Allahabad. But when the British attempted to board their boats, a group of sepoys led by Nana Sahib (often referred to by Indians as Nana Rao) attacked, killing most of the British and taking approximately 120 women and children hostage. The sepoys kept their hostages in a Bibighar house (brothel) on the outskirts of the town and the British sent another company of soldiers to rescue them. As the soldiers approached, Nana Sahib gave an order to have the women and children killed. The sepoys killed the hostages, stripped their bodies, and disposed of them in a nearby well. When the British soldiers arrived, they were horrified by what they had found. Beginning the process of commemorating the victims of the massacre, they painted phrases on the walls of the house such as “Remember Cawnpore!” as if written by the victims themselves. The soldiers also filled in and covered the well, erecting a small cross in front. The Viceroy Lord Charles Canning soon commissioned an official memorial. The Angel of Cawnpore, designed by the French sculptor Baron Carlo Marochetti, was completed in 1865. During this time, the British demolished the

¹ Several factors were considered in the decision to use this term. Ultimately, I have chosen to use “the Rebellion” because it currently is ascribed with mostly neutral connotations when referring to the events of 1857.

² This was the contemporaneous spelling of Kanpur. Each spelling will be used where they are historically appropriate.

house and created the park, naming it the Memorial Well Gardens. The British, who had regained control of the area, held approximately 130 sepoys responsible for these events and executed them by hanging, perhaps from the banyan tree. At the time, the British press and public focused on the massacre of the British women and children and the justice that must be served for such atrocious crimes. The phrase “Remember Cawnpore!” became a rallying cry for the British through the remainder of the Raj.

While the banyan tree plays a tangential role in the British narrative, it is at the heart of the other group of narratives about 1857. The Rebellion plays a much different role in the narratives perpetuated by Indians. Often referring to these events as the First Freedom Struggle, Indians claim 1857 as inspiration for the independence that would later come in 1947. In Kanpur, these narratives flip the script. They claim the sepoys and other Indians as the true victims of the conflict. Nana Rao³ is considered a leader and hero of the Rebellion rather than a perpetrator of heinous crimes. He and other leaders of the Rebellion are commemorated with statues and plaques noting their contributions to the Freedom Struggle in the modern version of the park. The executed sepoys are considered victims and their plight is highlighted by the poem on the tree’s monument. These monuments help to replace the British narrative with an Indian one that better serves the interests of the Indians in power today.

Both the British and Indian narratives touched on contemporary concerns that served the nationalistic interests of the two groups. In fact, the Rebellion affected many facets of the contemporary and modern world at large, ranging from the structure of imperial government to economics and social hierarchies. Telling particular histories, such as that of Nana Rao Park, through these frameworks is often successful in highlighting the effect of the Rebellion on those

³ The term “Rao” is preferred by Indians in describing Nana Sahib because it carries connotations of authority and princely status.

contemporary interests. Religious studies scholar Vaia Touna argued, however, that the past as it was is inaccessible. Rather, the past that is discussed in the present, such as these historical narratives, is always a construction of the speaker. She argued, “For that which we call the past owes its *whatever* presence to the present and the present is made possible by the way it imagines itself in relation to a past of its choosing.”⁴ Each and every time the past is invoked, exclusions are made and certain aspects emphasized. This presentation of the past creates a fabrication or construction of that past. To be clear, these narrators do not intentionally tout falsehoods. Nor should their narratives necessarily be considered a misstep. Touna made a clear distinction between falsehood and fabrication in her work. While there are things these fabrications are based on, Touna “use[d] here the term *fabricate* purposefully ... [but] any effort to retrieve an origin (as in their original or actual meaning) would be futile.”⁵ This is a distinction maintained here. These narratives always work to tell a particular story and to make a specific argument.

In Nana Rao Park, the construction of the past is carried out through the presence of these monuments and memorials.⁶ Each monument commemorates a particular person or event that presents deliberate choices in narrative made by those who established them. The original memorial in the park, the Angel of Cawnpore, also clearly demonstrated choice in narrativization. In the establishment, upkeep, and removal or replacement of each of these sites of commemoration, political interests play out through the conflict of narratives about 1857. The memorials serve as the tangible reflection and perpetuation of these narratives. Each site answers at least one question from at least one perspective: Who were the victims, perpetrators, or

⁴ Touna, *Fabrications of the Greek Past*, 144.

⁵ Touna, 11.

⁶ Despite slight differences in definition, I use the terms “memorial” and “monument” interchangeably throughout this thesis.

heroes? Who suffered? Why did such bloodshed take place? How are the dead categorized and commemorated to serve socio-political interests? In many ways, these sites and narratives happen on a micro-historical level. But they also shape how broader histories are told.

1857 and Scholarly Narratives

Scholarly work further reflects these shifting narratives. The changes in the monuments are analogous to changes in the historiography. From 1858 through the end of the Raj in 1947, narratives dominated by and sympathetic to the British influenced histories of India that attempted to cover the causes of the Rebellion. These historians certainly did not agree with each other in every aspect of their works, but all of their works celebrated British imperialism. In 1859, the British general Mowbray Thomson concluded one of the earliest histories of the Cawnpore massacre with a tribute to England:

There is room enough here for all the adventurous heroism and indefatigable perseverance that ever made the name of England great. The world looks with astonishment upon the fact that a tithe of the human race is entrusted to the tiny island in the northern seas, and wonders for the issue. In His own time, the God of the whole earth will show it.⁷

Likewise, T. R. E. Holmes wrote in 1883 of the importance of the Mutiny in Cawnpore in *A History of the Indian Mutiny*. He claimed, “It was indeed a tragic moment in the world’s history; for never, since wars begun, had a besieged garrison been called upon to do or to suffer greater things than were appointed for the garrison of Cawnpore.”⁸ The scene in Cawnpore that Holmes narrated is extreme. It led to the conclusion that if the British soldiers had faced the worst sufferings since the beginning of human conflict, then they must have been superior to those earlier soldiers. In fact, Holmes later wrote of the superiority of the British: “During the earlier

⁷ Thomson, *The Story of Cawnpore*, 262.

⁸ Holmes, T. R. E., *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, 238-239.

days of the siege the enemy, conscious of their moral inferiority to the men whom they had driven to bay, and relying on the strength of their artillery, contented themselves mainly with the safe process of bombardment.”⁹ The language Holmes used to describe the people the British fought speaks only to their presumed moral deficiency. There is no other formulation of or even attempt to understand who those people were and why they were fighting. Thomson and Holmes, of course, were not the only historians of the Raj who felt this way.

The British military historian John Williams Kaye felt strongly about the English-ness of the British¹⁰ and their superiority. In his history of the Mutiny published in 1880, Kaye wrote that, “The story of the Indian Rebellion of 1857 is, perhaps, the most signal illustration of our great national character ever yet recorded in the annals of our country. It was the vehement self-assertion of the Englishman that produced this conflagration; it was the same vehement self-assertion that enabled him, by God’s blessing, to trample it out.”¹¹ While Kaye seems to have understood that the sepoys did not rebel without provocation, he was unable to understand what exactly that provocation was or even think to question the opposition’s motivation at all. His history of the events of 1857 reflect his own assertion of British superiority. He went on to summarize his position: “Because we were too English the great crisis arose; but it was only because we were English that, when it arose, it did not utterly overwhelm us.”¹² For Kaye, the English-ness of being English was precisely what made the English superior to their subjects in the subcontinent. The histories of Thomson, Holmes, and Kaye are just a few examples of the

⁹ Holmes, T. R. E, 242.

¹⁰ For the purposes of this text, I make no distinction between “English” and “British.”

¹¹ Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War in India, 1857-1858*, xii.

¹² Kaye, xii.

broader pattern of contemporary British histories.¹³ Historians of the time that were interested in this material were almost exclusively British and never seriously considered the opposing perspectives.

Since the end of the Raj, the dominant tone in Western scholarship has become milder. While the works of historians like Lawrence James and Thomas Metcalf did not expressly praise the British for their superiority, they did still valorize the imperial project through the topics of their focus. In 2000, the historian Lawrence James focused on the British in *Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India*. The work narrativized the story of colonial India through the lens of the British while they were in power. When introducing the Rebellion, James wrote that, “Nemesis overtook the Raj in 1857, but it came slowly and its approach was hardly noticed.”¹⁴ Similarly, in *The Aftermath of Revolt* published in 1964, the historian of South Asia Thomas Metcalf noted the efforts of his predecessors: “British historians, anxious to minimize Indian grievances and to preserve the good faith of their own country, for many years insisted that the Mutiny was nothing more than a sepoy rising; hence the name.”¹⁵ But even through this observation of the perspective of British historians, Metcalf still only gave voice to the British narratives. Later in 2002, however, he briefly observed in *A Concise History of India* (with Barbara Metcalf) the importance of 1857 to both the British imperialists and the Indian

¹³ Bowcher, *Eight Months' Campaign against the Bengal Sepoy Army, during the Mutiny of 1857*; Adye, *The Defence of Cawnpore*; Chick, *Annals of the Indian Rebellion, 1857-58*; Bartlett, *The Heroes of the Indian Rebellion*; “The History of the Indian Mutiny: Giving A Detailed Account of the Sepoy Insurrection in India; and a Concise History of the Great Military Events Which Have Tended to Consolidate British Empire in Hindostan”; W. J. Shepherd, “A Personal Narrative of the Outbreak and Massacre at Cawnpore, during the Sepoy Revolt of 1857”; Lee, *The Indian Mutiny, and in Particular, a Narrative of Events at Cawnpore, June and July, 1857*; Hare, *The Story of Two Noble Lives, Being Memorials of Charlotte, Countess Canning, and Louisa, Marchioness of Waterford*; Trevelyan, “Cawnpore.”

¹⁴ James, *Raj*, 233.

¹⁵ Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt*, 56.

nationalists: “With greater distance from the colonial period, when the searing chaos of the uprising was understood either as ‘Mutiny’ to the colonial rulers or as the ‘First War of Independence’ to many nationalists, it is possible to focus on substantial, long-term transformations rather than on a single event.”¹⁶ The primary subject in both cases was the British and their perspective on the 1857 Rebellion. The British narrative controlled the perspective in these works precisely because they were the subjects of them. These works represent one trend in scholarly work since the end of the Raj, but the British narrative is no longer entirely dominant.¹⁷

The field of subaltern studies, and particularly the Subaltern Studies Collective, opened space for alternative narratives to be addressed. The work of these scholars focused more on the history of the masses rather than on the official histories of powerful figures.¹⁸ For example, the Indian historian Rudrangshu Mukherjee was expressly aware of the different approach he took to the same material Metcalf had used a couple of decades earlier. In 1984, he wrote, “[Metcalf’s] account is also based on some of the sources used here. But neither the revolt (or the ‘mutiny’ as Metcalf prefers to call it) nor the 1856-7 settlement are his chief concern; consequently even when the same sources are used he asks very different questions and does not find it necessary to delve into as much detail as I do.”¹⁹ In this way, Mukherjee clearly set himself apart from the dominant Western historical approach. He went on to summarize his approach to studying the 1857 Rebellion in Awadh: “The world of rebels and insurgents is always one where suppression and defeat lurk in the shadows. The revolt of 1857 also suffered its ultimate doom in spite of the

¹⁶ Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History of India*, 90.

¹⁷ Darwin, *The Empire Project*; Burton, *The Trouble with Empire*; Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires*.

¹⁸ Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*; Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony*; Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*; Chatterjee, *Empire and Nation*; Chatterjee, *The Black Hole of Empire*.

¹⁹ Mukherjee, *Awadh in Revolt, 1857-1858*, x.

popular and widespread support that it received in Awadh.”²⁰ Through this summary, Mukherjee showed that his study focused on Indians, rather than the British, demonstrating a shift in how these narratives were told. Likewise, in a broad history on colonized subjects opposing the British crown published in 1983, the historian of South Asia Ranajit Guha expressed the agency of those subjects. He wrote, “To acknowledge the peasant as the maker of his own rebellion is to attribute, as we have done in this work, a consciousness to him.”²¹ Guha, like other subaltern studies scholars, is known for this approach of giving voice (what Guha calls consciousness) to subjects previously silenced in the dominant historiography. The rise of subaltern studies had an affect on modern Western scholarship as well.

Generally, more recent Western scholarship has trended toward a focus on oppressed groups. In work on colonial India this has taken shape in an attempt to understand certain types of group formation. In particular, books by Heather Streets, Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst, and Jill C. Bender explored the racialization of certain groups of Indians in the aftermath of the Rebellion. Historian Heather Streets specifically addressed the role of race in military endeavors in India during and after the Rebellion in *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914*, published in 2004. While this work primarily dealt with British perceptions of the other, the focus remained on those groups that the British othered and stereotyped. For example, Streets noted the role Sikhs played in the British imagination: “By the end of 1857, Sikhs – like Highlanders – had been singled out for their exemplary roles in helping to crush the Rebellion, and for their supposedly premier soldierly qualities.”²² Through the

²⁰ Mukherjee, 171.

²¹ Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, 4.

²² Streets, *Martial Races*, 68-69.

argument on how the British imagined these groups, Streets brought into focus the groups themselves. Other recent works have focused on group formation as well.

In 2017, Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst wrote on the formation of Muslims in the British imagination. In *Indian Muslim Minorities and the 1857 Rebellion: Religion, Rebels, and Jihad*, Fuerst dealt with race somewhat differently than Streets. Fuerst approached the racialization of Muslims in the aftermath of the Rebellion as a socio-political issue with only minimal ties to the military and the Rebellion itself. But when addressing the Rebellion, Fuerst wrote, “This long year [1857] marked – and continues to mark – one of the most important moments in South Asian and British history alike. [...] Yet, the centrality of 1857 remains in both Euro-American and South Asian historiographies.”²³ There is a subtle shift here in which Fuerst noted the importance of 1857 to South Asian historiographies in addition to the Western. Broader histories on the events of 1857 have attempted to balance these opposing narratives as well.²⁴ In 2017, Jill C. Bender wrote, “While the atrocities committed at the hands of the Indians allegedly reflected the barbaric nature of the colonized, those committed by the British were explained as purely reactive and the only legitimate way to reestablish control.”²⁵ In each of these works, the British were not removed from subject-hood, but rather shifted to be adjacent to the groups of people that they had long worked to silence.

In scholarship on India, the dominant narrative once focused on the British in conflict with an almost completely unknown other. If the opposing groups and individuals were discussed at all, the narrative was dominated and shaped by British perceptions of those groups. But present scholarship has recognized the subject-hood of the other that the British had worked

²³ Fuerst, *Indian Muslim Minorities and the 1857 Rebellion*, 2.

²⁴ Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge*; Veer, *Imperial Encounters*; Burton, *At the Heart of the Empire*.

²⁵ Bender, *The 1857 Indian Uprising and the British Empire*, 4.

to suppress. These narratives no longer deal with the British in conflict with an unknown other, but rather show the means by which the British were able to suppress these opposing narratives. The works of historians like Thomson, Holmes, and Kaye established the precedent for the dominance of the British narrative. Just as scholars like James and Metcalf were influenced by those narratives, scholars recently publishing works that deal with the 1857 Rebellion have embraced the approach of subaltern studies scholars and incorporated multiple perspectives in their work. The micro-historical narratives of sites like Nana Rao Park are told through and reflected by these broader histories. As the shifts in these historical narratives were perpetuated, tangible reflections of those narratives shifted as well. Simply put, changes in scholarship paralleled changes in public commemoration.

It is possible to construct an entire micro-historical narrative of modern India through this park. Historical questions regarding the status and role of individuals and groups play out through debates surrounding the sites of commemoration in the park. The debates are over the presence, justification, and preservation of the monuments themselves, but they include many more layers. In debating these topics, locals debate the accepted facts of history. They debate the role of the British in India before, during, and after colonial rule. They debate the social politics of commemorating this or that hero, martyr, or victim. They debate the role of the historical narrative itself in present issues. In a sense, the history of colonial and modern India have played out in a park in a small city where locals go to get exercise and enjoy the trees and flowers.

Nana Rao Park

In modern day Kanpur, India, locals find a convenient place to immerse themselves in the nature of Nana Rao Park. Among the walking paths and trees of the park are a community pool

and benches as well as memorials commemorating the 1857 Rebellion. As a public park, it serves as a useful location for people to swim or go for a morning walk. The memorials consist of statues and plaques commemorating the Indian heroes of the Rebellion – the heroes fighting for Indian freedom. One does not need to look far to notice the impact memory of the Rebellion has left there. The park itself is named for Nana Rao, the historical figure Indians consider the leader of the local heroes from 1857. Beyond the name, memorials scattered throughout the park highlight varying aspects of the narratives about the Rebellion. The park is rich in these narratives due to its location and the process of public memory. But the park, like the dominant narrative, is not static. The narratives change continually, adapting to the interests of the narrators and audiences. The park in general and the memorials in particular change with those shifting narratives. As the park currently stands, the Rebellion is better understood as the Freedom Struggle. This park is one example of how these shifting narratives play out in a public space. In particular, two memorials stand out to those more familiar with these historical narratives of the park: the Nana Rao memorial and the Boodha Bargad monument. These memorials are considered here to be representative of the park overall. In both of these memorials, particular narratives are ascribed that incorporate the Rebellion in some way, but none of them – their presence, justification, or preservation – are actually about the Rebellion. Instead, the narratives shift to reflect the present concerns of interested parties.

One of the most striking instances of these shifting narratives is the memorial of Nana Rao (see fig. 2). The statue is located within a rotunda and depicts Nana Rao in traditional Indian clothing he likely would have actually worn and carrying his sword. A plaque noting important dates and information about his life also accompanies the memorial.²⁶ The plaque notes the local

²⁶ See Appendix A for a full translation of the plaque.

hero's inability to drive out the British while placing the blame of his failure on "traitors" – presumably sepoys who remained loyal to the British. The plaque also attributes the local drive for Indian freedom to Nana Rao: "The spark he ignited in 1857 became the flame that provided us freedom after 90 years." While it is unclear precisely when the statue was erected, the plaque



Figure 2: Nana Rao Memorial. Courtesy of TouristPlaces.net.

makes it apparent that the memorial was established after India had gained independence from British rule. Through the emphasis of 1857 as the “spark” that led to independence, the plaque provides a recasting of the British narrative of the Rebellion. In this version of the narrative, although the Rebellion was unsuccessful, it provided an origin story as the point of inspiration for the continuing struggle. The plaque itself highlights this claim.

During colonial rule, however, the British narrative dominated public opinion of Nana Sahib/Rao both in Britain and for the ruling Britons in India. According to several contemporary British newspapers, Nana Sahib was an important figure to be reviled rather than revered due to the massacre carried out in Cawnpore under his orders. Further, because Nana Sahib had fled and lived as a fugitive after the massacre, his role in the Rebellion was heavily emphasized in these newspapers. For example, a nineteenth century Methodist newspaper called *The Watchman*,

reported its own emphasis on the 1857 Rebellion: “We cannot help giving it precedence, for, whatever the issue of this rebellion, and whatever other prodigies and horrors it may bring forth, the massacre of Cawnpore and the name of Nana Sahib will hold rank among the foulest crimes and the greatest enemies of the human race to the end of the world.”²⁷ Exaggeration and embellishment of language were commonplace in newspapers of the time, but the phrase “to the end of the world” speaks to how strongly the British public felt about the massacre. Similarly, a somewhat fringe weekly newspaper called *The Leader*, published a story in late 1859 which began, “It is high time indeed that the telegram should announce the capture of the man who of all men that ever existed has done most despite to England.”²⁸ The article was entitled “The Nana Sahib ‘Wanted.’” These two articles can be considered representative of the general British consensus in regards to Nana Sahib at the time.²⁹ The present narrative of Nana Rao as local hero stands in direct contrast. By honoring him, modern day locals have made a deliberate choice to overturn the dominant British narrative about his life.

The categorization of Nana Sahib/Rao relies on the socio-political interests of the people categorizing. Because the narratives and very categorization of such figures are reliant on those interests, they can be understood as a type of political and ideological myth. Here the term “myth” does not designate a false story, but rather an idea, concept, or narrative that serves the interests of people who perpetuate them. Similarly, historian of religions Bruce Lincoln uses the

²⁷ “Nana Sahib and His Atrocities.”

²⁸ “The Nana Sahib ‘Wanted.’”

²⁹ “The Massacre at Cawnpore”; “The Cawnpore Tragedy”; “The Defence of Cawnpore”; “The Survivors of Cawnpore”; “How the Women Were Murdered at Cawnpore”; “The Nana Sahib”; “The Nana Sahib and His Refuge”; “The Reported Capture of Nana Sahib”; “Nana Sahib”; “Twenty-Five Years.”

term to describe the ways people use narratives rather than the stories themselves.³⁰ From this basis, political theorist Christopher Flood argued that mythmaking “is linked to the existence of competing sets of ideological beliefs about what society is and how it ought to be.”³¹ The narratives and therefore myths about Nana Sahib/Rao and the 1857 Rebellion are the product of and have a direct impact on those ideological beliefs about the status of India as either an Independent nation-state or British colony. The Rebellion has been a central topic of scholarship and local debates alike for this very reason. As Flood noted, “Other nations, and social groups within nations, represent their pasts according to their own selective identification of who and what mattered.”³² Narratives, particularly historical narratives, are always created with present concerns in mind. What an individual believes about the Rebellion dictates what they believe about what India *ought* to be and vice versa. The formation of this dichotomy further serves to develop national identity.

The colonial project on the whole dealt extensively with issues of group and national formation. The current status of Nana Rao Park reflects many of these issues. In *Imagined Communities*, political scientist Benedict Anderson addressed the concept of nationhood specifically, which is applicable to the dichotomy of the British and Indian narratives about Nana Sahib/Rao. Anderson argued that a nation is “imagined” and creates “community,” which he further explained.

It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. [...] Finally, it is imagined as a *community*, because,

³⁰ Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth*; Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society*; Lincoln, “Between History and Myth.”

³¹ Flood, *Political Myth*, 11-12.

³² Flood, 178.

regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.³³

For Anderson, the stability of a nation or group depends on the success of the imagined community. As soon as any aspect starts to break down, the rest of the group formation breaks with it. The community, the group, and the status of colonial power depend on these shared narratives, such as how Nana Sahib/Rao is classified. In forming the ideology of the nation, detailed choices must be made in the narratives that serve that ideology. For instance, when French philosopher Ernest Renan explored the ideological formations of a nation, he focused on qualities that nations claimed as representative of themselves. He argued that, “A large aggregate of men, healthy in mind and warm of heart, creates the kind of moral conscience which we call a nation. So long as this moral consciousness gives proof of its strength by the sacrifices which demand the abdication of the individual to the advantage of the community, it is legitimate and has the right to exist.”³⁴ This moral consciousness that Renan spoke about must be formed around shared narratives to achieve a level of collectivity. In Nana Rao Park, the categorization of Nana Rao as hero allows for the narrative to form around the idea of group sacrifice for the common good of the nation. In understanding Nana Rao as a hero to revere, Indians have established a singular narrative that feeds back into the political myth that establishes the Indian nation.

The narratives of Nana Rao are not alone in the work to recast the British narrative as an Indian one. A similar memorial to Tantia Tope, Nana Rao’s second in command, stands nearby. Not much is known about Tope and the exact relationship between him and Rao is unclear. After the massacre in Cawnpore, Rao fled to avoid British capture and Tope began acting in his name,

³³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6-7.

³⁴ Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, 20.

presumably with his consent. Tope was captured and executed by the British in 1859. The fact that Tope was captured and executed when Rao was not further aids the Indian narrative of Rao as hero. Like the statue of Nana Rao, the memorial for Tope (see fig. 3) in Nana Rao Park was erected sometime after Indian Independence and in the location of the massacre. Much more is known and debated about Nana Rao than Tantia Tope, which leads to the implied significance of the Nana Rao memorial over the Tope memorial. But the Rao and Tope memorials do not stand alone. The park is filled with memorials dedicated to other heroes of the Rebellion.



Figure 3: Tantia Tope Memorial. Courtesy of MouthShut.com.

These memorials of local heroes work precisely because they challenge the accepted history. The narratives ascribed to these memorials effectively communicate that the British narrative was insufficient while maintaining a sense of pride in local heroes. As Flood stated, “Any ideologically marked political story has the potential to become a myth if narrated by an

appropriate teller to an appropriate audience in appropriate circumstances.”³⁵ Despite the lack of a clear and precise narrative about Tantia Tope, the collective narrative of these local heroes destabilizes the long-standing dominant narrative of the British. Through these memorials, Rao, Tope, and others become heroes martyred rather than executed rebels.

Set apart from these statues, Boodha Bargad, the monolith commemorating a banyan tree, further destabilizes the British narrative. Boodha Bargad works to shift the narrative in a seemingly different way from the memorials for Tope and Rao. For years, the tree was regarded as either the exact spot or merely representative of the many trees on which approximately 130 sepoys were executed. The 1857 Rebellion ended when the British regained control of the land and began to execute or otherwise punish the Indians who had rebelled. Sometime in the early twenty-first century, the banyan tree died and was torn down. In its place, local historians and journalists dedicated the monolith, bearing a poem written in the voice of the tree (see fig. 4).³⁶ Soon, they also raised a barrier around the monolith and an offshoot of the original tree to protect it from so called “anti-social elements.”³⁷ Much of the narrative of this monument comes from local newspapers.³⁸ Some establish an origin of the makeshift monument back to 1857. But the tree is rarely mentioned in newspapers before it died. When it did, several papers bemoaned its loss. In an article on the memory of the tree, journalist Ishita Mishra wrote, “Thanks to the ignorant government officials, insensitive public and fame-loving heritage organizations, the centuries-old historical Banyan tree kept dying a slow death and none came forward to preserve

³⁵ Flood, *Political Myth*, 26.

³⁶ See Appendix B for a full translation of the engraving.

³⁷ “Boodha Bargad Dead, but Its Tale Still Alive.”

³⁸ “Apathy Kills Boorha Bargad”; “Kanpur’s Nanarao Park Swimming Pool Set to Open in June”; Tourism, “Kanpur- An Ocean of Industrial & Cultural Opulence”; “Boodha Bargad Is A Symbol Of Freedom Of India”; “Boodha Bargad in Kanpur, History of Boodha Bargad Kanpur.”

it.”³⁹ Whether the tree was the precise location of the executions or representative of many trees does not seem to matter for its commemoration. Here, the specifics have little bearing on the impact of the monument on the current public opinion in India.



Figure 4: Boodha Bargad Poem. Courtesy of OneWay.Cab

The poem on the monument recounts the events of 1857, alluding to the same “spark” for freedom noted on the plaque of Nana Rao’s memorial. It further highlights the horror of witnessing the execution of so many people:

³⁹ “Boodha Bargad Dead, but Its Tale Still Alive.”

That day I shook, I screamed again and again, my throat was constricted because of
screaming
Crying tears of the eyes have dried up, I groan as soon as I remember this horrifying
suffering

The poem is effective for two reasons. First, it explicitly puts into perspective the horror of so many executions in one location. The details of the tree's role in the execution of the sepoys do not matter because the point highlighted by the poem is that the British executed at least 130 people. The poem fails to explicitly mention why the sepoys were executed, but that knowledge is irrelevant even if they were considered responsible for the massacre of approximately 120 women and children. According to the Indian narrative, the sepoys were fighting for their freedom, not committing atrocious crimes as in the British narrative. Between these two events alone (which had been sparked by other deadly conflicts) more than 250 people were killed. Second, the poem is effective because it is written from the perspective of the tree. The tree is assumed to be a neutral witness to everything that happened in Kanpur before, during, and after the 1857 Rebellion. Were the poem written from the perspective of an executed sepoy or perhaps a British soldier, it would lose all credibility. The monument evokes sympathy and grief. It establishes Indians as the victims of the conflict, successfully turning the British narrative around.

While the memorials for Nana Rao and other local heroes recast the official narrative so that the perpetrators become the heroes, the Boodha Bargad monument introduces a new victim into the debate. The monument raises doubt as to whether the sepoys were truly rebelling soldiers committing atrocious violence. Instead, the monument suggests, the sepoys were actually victims martyred for a worthy cause. Effectively, this monument achieves what the others in the park cannot. The tree evokes emotions of loss and sympathy rather than the aggression or pride evoked by the memorials for specific local heroes. Renan concluded that in

the formation of a nation narratives evoking those emotions are the most: “Where national memories are concerned, griefs are of more value than triumphs, for they impose duties, and require a common effort.”⁴⁰ By introducing the executed sepoy as victims, the Boodha Bargad monument plays into these griefs to form those national memories known as the Freedom Struggle. These evoked emotions have a stronger bearing on the effectiveness of the monument than the precision of the historical narrative, which is not presented as entirely factual. But as the philosopher and historian R. G. Collingwood argued in *The Idea of History*, “Historical knowledge is the knowledge of what mind has done in the past, and at the same time it is the redoing of this, the perpetuation of past acts in the present.”⁴¹ By being presented as a neutral account, the poem from the perspective of the tree allows the individuals reading the poem on the monolith to suspend disbelief and reimagine the past in the present moment.

Collectively, these memorials represent Nana Rao Park as it stands today along with the narratives told about it and the Rebellion. Each memorial does specific work in reclaiming the narratives of the 1857 Rebellion, but together they turn the former narratives on their heads. Simply put, where the British were the victims and the Indians the perpetrators, the Indians are now presented as the victims *and heroes* and the British are presented as the perpetrators of cruelty. Turning the roles of the Britons and Indians in the narratives around serves nationalistic interests by creating and perpetuating collective narratives and myths. The addition and complication of explicitly identifying heroes to the narrative of the memorials allows for this new iteration of the narratives of 1857 to better reflect current interests. There are no more British rulers to contest the local narratives and enforce their own. Currently these memorials stand, inviting the park’s consumers to engage with the local history as told by those presently in

⁴⁰ Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, 19.

⁴¹ Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 218.

power, but the park has not always been presented in this way. Even before these memorials and India gaining independence in 1947, different people were invoking the 1857 Rebellion for ostensibly different reasons. Yes, the present of modern day India dictates the narratives told about the past. But during the British Raj, the contemporaneous interests dictated the opposing narratives told about the same events of that past.

Memorial Well Gardens

Prior to Indian Independence in 1947, Nana Rao Park was called the Memorial Well Gardens (see fig. 5). The area was used similarly to how it is used today – for light exercise, immersion in nature, etc. – with one notable exception. British tourists primarily came to the



Figure 5: Memorial Well Gardens. Courtesy of Nineteenth Century Collections Online.

park to see the memorial well dedicated to the victims of the Cawnpore Massacre. During the Raj, it was common for the British to tour India and other colonies as an assertion of the empire.

Historian Charles V. Reed has argued that, “[British tours] were not produced in isolation but as part of an effort by colonial officials at home and abroad to develop an imperial culture that would secure the bonds of empire in a period of rather great uncertainty.”⁴² These tours often included sites of previous conflict as an expected item on the itinerary. In Cawnpore, the Memorial Well Gardens were a popular stop on these tours. The gardens consisted of a large park with the memorial well at its center (see fig. 6). The memorial well itself was composed of a



Figure 6: Memorial Well at Center of Gardens. Courtesy of Guava Gardens Blog.

statue of an angel (known as the Angel of Cawnpore) placed on top of a bricked over well and was surrounded by a gothic style stone screen. Beneath the well lay the bodies of the women and children killed in the Cawnpore Massacre. The well is still a common topic in modern scholarship because of the role it took on in the popular British imagination. The gardens as a popular tourist location, the tales of sexual exploitation that derived from the scene the soldiers found, and the rallying cry of “Remember Cawnpore!” were all formed around the imperial interests of the British based on the 1857 Rebellion. But the role these narratives and ideas

⁴² Reed, “Royal Tourists, Colonial Subjects and the Making of a British World, 1860–1911,” xxi.

played in British public opinion were always about the contemporary concerns of establishing and maintaining empire rather than the Rebellion itself. These concerns ranged from the specific and concrete – motivate the troops to continue to fight for control – to the broad and more abstract – justify imperial rule and continued presence in the subcontinent. As much as the 1857 Rebellion has become a monolithic origin point for Indian Independence, the Rebellion also served as a significant event during the Raj to support imperial rule. The deliberate choices made in the construction of the gardens and memorial reflect those concerns and justifications.

In the aftermath of the Cawnpore Massacre, the Bibighar house was leveled and the area converted into a park. The park's name – the Memorial Well Gardens – suggested the memorial at the center was the focal point of the park. During the tours of the gardens, British tourists encountered a memorial guarded by a British soldier who had survived the massacre and seemingly took great pride in this role. In many ways, the tourism of sites like this became a public display of grief and mourning. The commemoration of the massacre may have seemed like nothing more than a result of this grief at the time, but commemoration is always a political act. The outward display of commemoration, both in the erecting of a monument and the act of touring the park, contributed to the formation of the narratives of the park, which helped to form British national and imperial ideology. In clearing the land for a park, the British were able to assert an imagined superiority based on social boundaries of race and gender. Indians were banned from the park unless carrying a permit. Further, as Streets noted, “British calls for retribution for the murders at Kanpur were framed in the language of masculine honour, as a struggle to punish cowardly scoundrels for violating British women, and as a mission to rescue those women still at risk in India.”⁴³ The narratives the British told about the Cawnpore

⁴³ Streets, *Martial Races*, 44.

Massacre demarcated group boundaries based on race and the treatment of women. While the park served to ease the pain of the collective memory, it also further marginalized Indians through its domination of the popular and accepted narrative.

By controlling the narrative, the British furthered boundaries on group formation in India. Groups are formed by ideologies of likeness. Whether those ideas of likeness are imposed by others outside the group or are directly claimed by the groups they form often has little bearing on the group formation itself. In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson argued that nations (and groups in general) are imagined as limited, “because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations.”⁴⁴ This idea of limited-ness directly effected nationalistic ideals for both the Indians fighting for independence from the British and the British fighting to maintain imperial rule. When the British established the park, they asserted the boundaries of what could and what could not count as British. Although Indians were subjects of the British crown, they were decidedly *not* British. Reflecting this boundary, the park was a popular tourist location for Britons, but Indians were only allowed inside the park with a special permit. Each group was therefore limited to predefined social boundaries.

Further enforcement of these boundaries came with the memorial itself. After the massacre, a small cross was erected near the well, which had been bricked over (see fig. 7). Due to British popular demand, in 1861, the viceroy commissioned a permanent memorial to replace the cross. His wife Lady Canning sketched a design that included the garden and stone screen to surround a sculpture. Many proposals for the sculpture itself were submitted, including “a sculpture consisting of dead children lying at the feet of an English woman leaning against a

⁴⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.



Figure 7: Well and Cross. Photograph taken by John Murray, Murray Collection.

cross pierced with a sword.”⁴⁵ The idea was considered too gruesome and was rejected.

Ultimately, the design chosen was Carlo Marochetti’s Angel of Cawnpore (see fig. 8). The Bibighar house was demolished and the land cleared for the gardens. The memorial was completed in 1865 with an inscription around the base reading:

SACRED TO THE PERPETUAL MEMORY OF A GREAT COMPANY OF CHRISTIAN PEOPLE, CHIEFLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN, CRUELLY MASSACRED NEAR THIS SPOT BY THE REBEL NANA SAHIB, AND THROWN, THE DYING WITH THE DEAD, INTO THE WELL BENEATH ON THE XVTH DAY OF JULY, MDCCCLVII.⁴⁶

The British required Indians in Cawnpore to pay a fine for their complicity, real or imagined, in the Rebellion and massacre. It was this fine that paid for the memorial. Throughout colonial rule, this memorial served as a site for British tourism, “and a decade after the Mutiny it was visited

⁴⁵ Ward, *Our Bones Are Scattered*, 550.

⁴⁶ Heathorn, “Angel of Empire.”

more frequently than the Taj Mahal.”⁴⁷ But even though the memorial was paid for by Indians and popular among British tourists, Indians themselves were never allowed within the screen surrounding the statue, even if they had a permit for the gardens.



Figure 8: Angel of Cawnpore. Courtesy of The Victorian Web.

The British dedicated the memorial specifically to the massacred women and children, but this was only one piece of the collective memory surrounding Cawnpore during the 1857 Rebellion. Another memorial for the entirety of the Rebellion in Cawnpore was established nearby. The memorial became an Anglican church called All Souls (now Kanpur Memorial Church), built in 1862 and consecrated in 1875 (see fig. 9). During the Independence movement in 1947, the Angel of Cawnpore was vandalized. After repairs were made, the statue was moved with a section of the stone screen to this church where it still stands today (see figs. 10 and 11). The well was paved over, but the narratives did not immediately fade. As historian Andrew Ward noted, “Whenever Indians dared propose to rule themselves, the British would flourish the

⁴⁷ Ward, *Our Bones Are Scattered*, 551.



Figure 9: All Souls Church. Courtesy of Guava Gardens Blog.



Figure 10: Angel of Cawnpore at All Souls Church. Courtesy of TripAdvisor.



Figure 11: Angel of Cawnpore at All Souls Church. Courtesy of Guava Gardens Blog

bloody relics of the Bibighar as proof of Indian barbarity.”⁴⁸ The British considered all Indians to be complicit in the Rebellion, thereby justifying their continued rule. But since Indian Independence in 1947, locals have changed the memorials in the park, shifting the dominant narratives and accepted histories.

The domination of a narrative at any given time relies on claims of authority and truth. In *Power/Knowledge*, French philosopher Michel Foucault recognized the constructed nature of narratives and argued that because of this, “Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power.”⁴⁹ The British claimed authority through imperial control and the establishment of memorials. Their narratives persisted. These narratives were presented as and considered the truth, precisely because of this

⁴⁸ Ward, 552.

⁴⁹ Foucault and Gordon, *Power/Knowledge*, 131.

authoritative power. As historian Hayden White wrote, “A given culture is only as strong as its power to convince its least dedicated member that its fictions are truths.”⁵⁰ The combination of the authoritative power of the British and their concerns to subdue the 1857 Rebellion forced narratives to take hold that were almost exclusively in favor of the British. In Cawnpore, the resulting memorial became a physical reminder of those narratives.

The narratives assigned to wells played a particularly interesting role in the assertion of British power in India. As a matter of contemporary standards of sanitation, wells often became mass burial sites on both sides of the conflict. While the well in Cawnpore was covered and formally commemorated, other wells across India, especially ones in which the British buried Indian bodies, were merely covered over. The well in Cawnpore had taken on a role in the imperial narrative of Britain where other wells had not. In one particular instance, a British deputy commissioner methodically executed 237 unarmed sepoys in groups of ten and then “suffocated forty-five more in a closed cell. He then threw all their bodies into ‘a deep dry well,’ as [he] described it, whose ‘presence furnished a convenient solution as to the one remaining difficulty, which was of sanitary consideration.’”⁵¹ This other massacre often goes unnoted, despite the commissioner’s own account: “There is a well at Cawnpore, but there is also one in Ujnalla.”⁵² The narratives of these two wells stand in stark contrast of one another. The well in Cawnpore became the burial place of the British victims and served the imperial narrative. The well in Ujnalla, however, was largely forgotten because it did not serve either the British or Indian narrative in an effective way. Additionally, the Ujnalla well can be read as a reaction to the myth of the Cawnpore well. As White argued, “As thus envisaged, to *historicize* any

⁵⁰ White, *Tropics of Discourse*, 153.

⁵¹ Ward, *Our Bones Are Scattered*, 552-553.

⁵² Thompson, *Other Side of the Medal*, 67.

structure, to write its history, is to mythologize it: either in order to effect its transformation by showing how ‘unnatural’ it is [...], or in order to reinforce its authority by showing how consonant it is with its context, how adequately it conforms to ‘the order of things.’”⁵³ In the British imagination, the rebelling sepoys had committed horrible acts in Cawnpore that called for vengeance in Ujnalla and elsewhere throughout the subcontinent.

In Cawnpore, British soldiers came upon a scene that horrified them. They discovered the naked bodies of the massacred women and children in the bottom of the well. This led to rumors of sexual assault and other atrocities committed against the victims before their massacre. The soldiers altered the scene in order to fit the narrative they already believed. The well was filled in with dirt to cover the bodies and, when rain washed much of the dirt down and away, the well was bricked over entirely. Meanwhile, the acts of commemoration began with the small cross that had been erected nearby. Whether or not the atrocities ascribed to the events actually took place remains beside the point. These narratives took hold in the British public memory of the events. Because the narratives had enraptured the public, commemoration was called for, leading to the statue and gardens. Each step of this commemoration has served a role in the development in the collective British memory that reinforced, piece-by-piece, British national and imperial formation. The beginning of the now more than 150 years of ongoing commemoration in this area seems directly tied to grief and mourning for the dead. But even then, the soldiers’ response to the scene they found was invested in contemporary concerns. As White succinctly put it, “Every history has its myth.”⁵⁴

⁵³ White, *Tropics of Discourse*, 103-104.

⁵⁴ White, 127.

Conclusion

Telling a history requires the construction of a narrative. In Nana Rao Park and its predecessor the Memorial Well Gardens, these histories were constructed through the establishment and public reception of memorials. Today in Nana Rao Park, there are memorials dedicated to particular heroes of the 1857 Freedom Struggle along with a monument commemorating the loss of Indian life at the hands of British rulers. Each monument and memorial does a particular kind of work in the construction of the narrative of the 1857 Rebellion as the Freedom Struggle, which is a narrative that aided the development of Indian national identity. Each site of commemoration creates a subtle assertion in the narrative to categorize certain people in particular ways to achieve this end. Nana Rao and Tantia Tope became heroes. The rebelling sepoy executed at the hands of the British became victims. But the British had their own narrative and their own people to present as victims. Their commemoration, through the Angel of Cawnpore, worked to achieve somewhat different ends, but by similar means: commemorating the loss of life through violence seen as unjustified. The narratives about the history of the park shifted over time through the establishment of these varying memorials. In the park, the narratives are received by a casual public; but the events in Cawnpore in 1857 did not exist in a vacuum and their context matters to how those histories are told, both publicly and in academia.

The shifting narratives about 1857 have also affected the scholars who write about them. British historians constructed their narratives entirely around the British and explicitly sympathized with their subjects. Later, scholars like Thomas Metcalf and Lawrence James reflected a sense of awareness that their work often presented one-sided narratives. Influenced by the works of subaltern studies scholars such as Rudrangshu Mukherjee and Ranajit Guha, more

recent Western scholars such as Heather Streets and Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst have adapted to present day scholarly interests by incorporating the nuance and context of multiple narratives into their work. There is a subtle shift in the narratives of their publications, just like in the narratives of the park. This shift raises doubt in the absolute authority of the British narratives of the 1857 Rebellion by suggesting that the detail of the British classifications of groups and of individuals may have been served by contemporary socio-political interests. That is to say, the British narratives were constructed with the empire always in mind. Recognizing this influence, scholars now question the once dominant British narrative. This questioning brings about further research into opposing narratives, opening up a whole new set of questions to explore. In many ways, this shift can be seen as an advancement in how academia approaches its material. Yet it still works in the same way, always affected by authoritative narratives.

As the questions Western scholars raise change, visitors to Nana Rao Park learn about local history, and the conflict between British and Indian national identity plays out through contested narratives, the bodies of the massacred women and children remain in a bricked over well beneath the earth. Andrew Ward concluded his history of the Cawnpore massacre with a personal anecdote:

I asked one of the schoolboys playing cricket nearby in an empty fountain basin if he knew what had happened here almost a century and a half ago. He did not, he said, and listened politely as I told him of the massacre at the Bibighar. "Quite impossible," he said, gazing at the sandstone slab beneath us. "The British would never have buried their dead so carelessly."⁵⁵

While these bodies decompose, no one knows what became of the bodies of the sepoys the British executed on a tree. Even the tree is gone. A monolith stands instead, commemorating their deaths. Indians and Britons, citizens and historians continue to contest the narratives

⁵⁵ Ward, *Our Bones Are Scattered*, 554.

accompanying each memorial revealing the vested interests of identity and nation in a park in
Cawnpore.

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APPENDIX A

Nana Rao Memorial Plaque Translation

Revolutionary leader of 1857 Nana Sahib (leader of Marathas)

1. Born in year 1824 in Maharashtra near Pune in a kind of small village Venu.
2. Father's name was Madhav Narayan and mother's name was Ganga Bai.
3. On 7 June 1827, Peshav Baji Rao II adopted him at two and a half years old.
4. By means of Nana Sahib Manu (Lakshmibai) in this enclave trained with arrows, swords and developed battle skills.
5. In 1851 after Peshav Baji Rao's death Nana Sahib took the throne.
6. The English, rejecting his adoption as a son, refused Nana Sahib's accession to the Peshav (raja).
7. In year 1854 Nana Sahib against other Indian Rajas with intention to learn the desire of British rulers sent his Military Advisor Ajimullah Khan to London.
8. In April 1857 with the help of the people's revolutionary, he called to drive the English outside of India.
9. Because of some traitors he couldn't succeed in driving out the English outside of India.
10. The spark he ignited in 1857 became the flame that provided us freedom after 90 years.
11. English couldn't catch him alive. He was a light who lived like a torch (flame). He lived with honor as long as he lived. He always lived with the dream of gaining freedom.

APPENDIX B

Boodha Bargad Monument Translation

Martyr Garden (1857-1947)

Why do you want to know about me at all?

Listen

I'm not only a tree covered with leaves

But am also a witness to enslaved India and even today.

I saw innumerable spring and autumn, 4 June 1857 that day only when in Meerut

Inflamed a spark of freedom in Kanpur

Became a flame.

Before Nana Sahib, I saw Tatya Tope's heroism, I saw Queen Lakshmi's sacrifice,

I saw Ajimullah Khan's martyrdom.

I remember that day when in Barrackpur cantonment hung on my brother the revolutionary forerunner Mangal Pandey was hung

Who took upon himself fear/trembling of the nation's citizens.

Nation's freedom brought a cruel and oppression-filled disaster on the court of the nation's freedom issues from my root then was agitated.

The day when that heart was made to tremble today now also not be forgotten when 133 nationalists the English hung with many nooses from only my branches.

That day I shook, I screamed again and again, my throat was constricted because of screaming
Crying tears of the eyes have dried up, I groan as soon as I remember this horrifying suffering.

Your – Boodha Bargad

Revolutionary lives, historical men in attendance:

All brothers of heroic priest Tatya Tope Shri Narayan Rav Tope, martyr Ajam Bhagat Singh's younger brother Duya Sunani Kalatar Singh, Rajendra Singh, Ram Krishna, Khatri, Jayadev Kapur, Ashaphak Ullah's grandson, Karnal Dillan, Lephtinent Manvati Arya, Commander Man Mohan Gupta, Major E. H. Virasi, Ramesh Gupta, Commander P. Ramshankar Shukla, Brother Martyr Shaligram Shukla, Vishva That Mathur, and Master revolutionary hero Shiva Varmi Shakda.

Unveiling – Shri Narendra Mohan Editor of 'Jagaran'

Generosity – Surendra Pratap Singh, advocate, and Ranjit Singh Lal descendants

Sunday 18 October 1992