

Sword of Shivaji Maharaj

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In news– The state government of Maharashtra has announced that it is working to bring back the sword of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj from London to India.

History of the sword of Shivaji-

- According to historian Indrajit Sawant, who has written a book ('Shodh Bhavani Talwaricha') tracing the journey of the **sword, it was given to Edward, the Prince of Wales** (the later King Edward VII), **by Shivaji IV in 1875-76.**
- **The Chhatrapati of Karveer was in possession of this sword** which was **used by Shivaji Maharaj.** The catalogue of his armoury is available, which describes this sword as that of Shivaji Maharaj, and has its description, including how many diamonds it has.
- The meeting between the two (Edward and Shivaji IV) was held in Mumbai, and as a return gift, the Prince of Wales presented another sword to Shivaji IV.
- Currently, the **sword is part of the Royal Collection Trust at Saint James's Palace in London.** A catalogue of the weapons of King Edward VII that was printed in London, **describes the sword as "a relic of Shivaji the Great".**
- The Trust's portal has a picture of an 18th century "sword and scabbard" from Maharashtra, which it says was "Presented to King Edward VII, when Prince of Wales, during his tour of India in 1875-76".
- As per the trust the dimensions of the "whole object" as "127.8 x 11.8 x 9.1 cm", and its "blade length" as "95.0 cm", or a little more than 3 feet.
- Shivaji IV was barely 11 years old then, and like many other Indian kings of the time, he was forced by the British to "gift" them valuable presents, which included

weapons with historical significance.

- Prince Edward was especially fond of collecting weapons. His return gift to the Maratha king, which was another sword, is now at the New Palace Museum in Kolhapur. The specifications of this sword are inscribed on it.
- **Edward returned to England after an eight-month tour of India in May 1876.** That same month, the British Parliament bestowed his mother, Queen Victoria, with the title of Empress of India.
- Upon her death in 1901, Edward became King Edward VII and Emperor of India and reigned until 1910, when he was succeeded on the throne by George V.

Previous attempts made in the past to bring the sword back-

- **The first of these efforts was made by Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, when he visited London to fight a suit of libel he had filed against the journalist Sir Valentine Chirol** for derogatory references made in Chirol's book, 'Indian Unrest'.
- **Subsequently, the Marathi poet and playwright Ram Ganesh Gadkari**, who wrote under the pen name of Govindagraj, made references to the sword in a poem.
- After independence, the **first Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Yashwantrao Chavan**, pursued the matter.
- Later, Chief Minister A R Antulay announced efforts to bring the sword back, and started collecting documents to build a case for India.
- **At the time, however, the sword was referred to as the "Bhavani" sword**, and the British argued that a sword of that name is already there in Maharashtra's Satara district.

Difference between the "Bhavani" and "Jagdamba" swords-

- The "Bhavani" sword, now in Satara, was also used by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, who had at least three swords.

- But this sword is different from the one in London, which is called “Jagdamba” in the catalogue of Chhatrapati of Karveer.

Further reading: <https://journalsofindia.com/shivaji-maharaj/>