Tree and serpent worship

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The Tope At Sanchi.

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THE TOPE AT SANCHI.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory.

Before proceeding to describe the two buildings which form the subject of the present work, it may be convenient to point out, as briefly as possible, the general characteristics of Buddhist architecture, and to indicate the relations of these two monuments to the other members of the group to which they belong.

In the first place, it cannot be too strongly insisted upon, or too often repeated, that stone architecture in India commences with the age of Aśoka (B.C. 250). Not only have we as yet discovered no remains whatever of stone buildings anterior to his reign, but all the earliest Caves either in Behar or in the western Ghâts show architecture in the first stage of transition from wood to stone. One half, indeed, of the essential architectural structures of the Caves at Bhâjâ and Kârlee, and of the earliest at Ajanta, is wooden, and the wood still remains in some of them to the present day. Though some of these Caves are earlier than the Christian era, none are so old as the time of Aśoka.*

Whether looked at from an archæological, an architectural, or an ethnographic point of view, this wooden origin of Indian Buddhist architecture is one of the most interesting facts connected with the subject. To the archæologist it affords an assurance that in this instance, at least, we have got to the beginning of things, and that all beyond the first imitation of wood can only be rude masses of stone that in themselves tell no tales, and can only be dated from evidence external to themselves.

The architect, in studying this art, feels that for once he is assisting at the birth of a new style, and that during the five or six centuries, to which this work refers (B.C. 250 to A.D. 360), he is gradually watching the growth of an original form of art, which was uninfluenced by any external or foreign element, but left to its own innate powers of development.†

The steps by which the rail at Sanchi was elaborated into that at Amravati will be pointed out in the sequel, in so far as they are at present ascertained;

* For particulars I must refer the reader to my History of Architecture, II., p. 456, et seq.

† The nearest approach to anything like this in the west, is to be found in Lycia. Its early tombs are as wooden as the Caves of India, but they fell almost immediately under the influence of Greek art, and became Ionic before they had time to develope themselves into a native Lycian style.

and it forms as interesting an example of the natural development of style as anything in the history of architecture. There may, it is true, be some difference of opinion as to the beauty of the Amravati example, but there can be none as to its originality; and even those who may be inclined to dispute the taste displayed in its design, must admit that it is singularly appropriate to the purposes to which it is applied, and in richness of ornament one of the most elaborate pieces of architecture to be found in any part of the world.

It is perhaps, however, in an ethnographic point of view that this wooden origin of Buddhist architecture is most interesting. As I have frequently had occasion to point out in another work,* the Aryan races are not builders. They always had too firm a conviction of the immortality of the soul, and consequently of the existence of a future state, ever to care much for a brick or stone immortality in this world; and no material art satisfied the cravings of their higher intellectual powers. The Turanians, on the contrary, never rose to a distinct idea of an external God, nor of a future state, but supplied the place of the latter by metempsychosis and final annihilation, while their intellectual status never enabled them to create such a literature as would satisfy that hankering after immortality which is inherent in the human breast. It consequently happens that all the literature of India belongs to the Aryan or Sanscrit speaking races, and all the buildings to the Turanians or those speaking Dravidian or cognate tongues. The result of this distinction, in so far as the present subject is concerned, is this: so long as the Aryans retained their purity of blood and supremacy of power, no permanent buildings were erected in India. On the other hand, if there is one fact with reference to Buddhism more clear than another, it is that it is the religion of a Turanian race. It was not a reform on the Vedic religion of the Aryans, but simply that when they had lost their purity, Sâkya Muni called on the subject races to rise, and moulded their feelings and their superstitions into that form of faith we now know as Buddhism. It was when these Turanians first came into power that permanent architecture was thought of in India; and as they grew in strength, and their influence extended, so did their architecture acquire consistency, and spread over the length and breadth of the land. They had no literature, or next to none; at least we have not yet found one Buddhist book that was reduced to its present shape till nearly 1,000 years after the death of the founder of the religion;† but we have buildings everywhere, and it is this circumstance that renders their architecture so valuable in an historical point of view, and so interesting as an expression of a great ethnographic fact.

Stated in its broadest term, the distinction is this,—all the literature of India is Aryan, all the architecture Turanian; and the latter did not come into existence till the former race had lost their purity and power, or, in other words, till the Turanian religion, known as Buddhism, rose to the surface, and its followers usurped the place hitherto occupied by the Aryans and their Vedas.

Without attempting too minute a classification, the Buddhist buildings erected in India since Aśoka's time may be arranged in three principal groups:—

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* History of Architecture, Introduction, et passim.

† Max Müller, Chips from a German Workshop, I. p. 196.

1st. Topes or Stûpas, with their surrounding rails and lâṭs; two of the oldest known examples of these, which happen also to be among the richest and most elaborately ornamented, form the subject of the present work.

2nd. Chaityas. Both in form and purpose these are almost absolutely identical with the early Churches of the Christians, though several of those cut in the rock were most probably excavated before the Christian era.

3rd. Vihâras, or Monasteries, forming in the earliest times the residences of the monks or priests who were attached to the service of the Topes or Chaityas, but afterwards the independent abode of monastic communities, who had chapels or places set apart for devotional purposes within the walls of their monasteries.

Taking the last first, we are almost wholly dependent on rock examples for our knowledge of the arrangement and mode of adornment of Indian monasteries. Of these, probably not less than 800 to 1,000 examples are still known to remain in India, of all ages, and extending from a century or two before the Christian era to the tenth or eleventh century afterwards. They also are of all sizes, from the simple cell of a single anchorite to a great hall 80 feet square and more, and sometimes surrounded by sixteen or twenty cells for the accommodation of the monks. The difficulties of lighting naturally limited the extent of each individual example in the rock, but they are generally found in groups of twenty or thirty Vihâras, affording, when taken together, accommodation for a large religious community.

The ruins of a very large Vihâra have been recently excavated at Sârnâth, near Benares.* It had, however, been destroyed by fire, and nothing but the foundation of the walls now remains. A still larger one was cut through by the railway works near Sultangunge in Bhagulpore, and destroyed of course; but here also nothing but the foundations remained, sufficient to show the plan, but nothing more. In 1861–2 General Cunningham found the remains of the great Nâlanda Vihâra to extend 1,600 feet in one direction by 400 in another, and no doubt excavations might bring some interesting particulars to light regarding this most celebrated of Indian monasteries, but too much must not be hoped for.† It was built of wood and brick, and for more than 1,000 years it has been used as the quarry of the fertile district in which it stood.

At Sanchi there are the remains of several Vihâras. One of the best preserved is represented in the Photographic Plate, No. XXIII. Its date is comparatively modern, probably ranging from the eighth to the tenth century, and its dimensions are so small—about 100 feet across—that it would hardly be worth notice were it not that it happens to be the best preserved specimen of a Buddhist structural Vihâra known to exist in India. It will be described further on.

As might be expected, the Chaitya Caves are much fewer in number than the Vihâras; not more than twenty have been described; and it is hardly probable that more than thirty exist. As before hinted, they are almost exact counterparts of the choirs of Christian churches, consisting of a central nave, at the inner end of which stands the Dagoba or Stone Altar, either containing or simulated to contain a relic. Round this and along either side runs an aisle, which is entered by one

* J. A. S. B., Volume for 1844, p. 473.

† General Cunningham's Report to Government for 1861–62, p. 11.

of three doors, which open outwardly under a gallery corresponding to the rood-loft of Christian churches. The central aisle was covered with a roof, supported by wooden ribs, like the hull of a ship turned upside down—semicircular internally, but of an ogee shape outside. In all the earlier Caves the ribs were put up in wood, and at Karlee remain to this day as they were put up 1800 years ago, but in later Caves their form was repeated in stone, and afterwards merged into a purely lithic ornament.

The only example of a structural Chaitya yet brought to light is a small one at Sanchi, which will be described when speaking of Plate XXII. Like the Vihâra it is small, and so much ruined that it is not easy to feel sure how it was originally finished, but as a unique example it is well worthy of attention.

We should not, perhaps, be justified in asserting that the Stûpas* or Topes were at all times the most important monuments of the Buddhist. They have become so now, but that may be owing to their form and the solidity of their construction, which has prevented their decay, while the more complex structures of the Vihâras and Chaityas, and the frailer materials of which they were composed, have caused their disappearance. Judging from the glowing descriptions given by the Chinese travellers of the Sanghârâmas (Halls of Assembly) which they visited, and the monasteries in which they were entertained, it would appear that they considered them at least as important.

The Tope is, however, a solid circular pyramid† of brick or stone, and from its form, and under similar circumstances, might have lasted as long as those of Egypt. Those, however,—especially in the valley of the Ganges,—have long been used as quarries by the inhabitants of these thickly-peopled plains, and have consequently disappeared. With very few exceptions, it is only in remote or in thinly-peopled districts that any examples are now to be found.

It scarcely admits of a doubt but that the Tope is the lineal and direct descendant of the funereal Tumulus which, from the very earliest age to which our knowledge extends, the Turanian races—and probably some others—raised over the graves of their dead. Such Tumuli exist all over the north of Asia; they are found in Asia Minor and in Greece. They crowd the cemeteries of Etruria. They are far from being uncommon in Germany, and in the western parts of France. We all know what numbers of them dot the downs of Wiltshire and Devon, wherever an open country enabled a pastoral people to despasture their flocks without the necessity of clearing away the forest; and they are frequent in Scandinavia, and over the whole of the north of Europe.

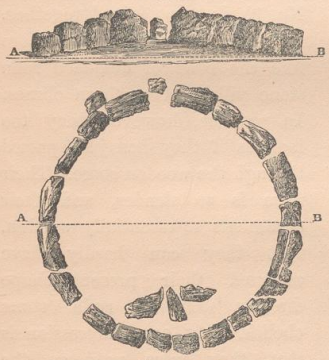
It is doubtful whether any sepulchral Tumuli exist in India. If these were of earth, the probability is they would be washed away by the overflowing rivers or by the tropical rains, but they do exist in Afghanistan, grouped around the Topes.‡ There are two peculiarities which distinguish the Tope of India from the Tumuli of other countries. The first is, that being of brick or stone the material enabled them to assume a rounded or domical form, while the earthen Tumulus was as generally

* From the Sanscrit, *Stûpa*, a mound or heap.
† Clemens of Alexandria, Stromat. I. 15.
‡ Masson, in Wilson's Ariana Antiqua, 61, et seqq.

straight lined. The circular form seems to have been adopted to assimilate them with the roofs of their other sacred and domestic buildings, which we learn from the sculptures were always curvilinear in outline. The second peculiarity is, that, instead of being the last resting place of a body, they had become depositories of relics only. Precisely the same change took place in the Middle Ages, when the stone coffin became an altar, and the place of the deposit of relics and other treasures, instead of containing a body. In India, where the practice of burning the dead seems always to have prevailed, this probably took place from the first. It may, however, be considered as an argument in favour of the foreign (Scythian?) nature of Buddhism in India, that the Tope should have been domical from the first instead of straight-lined, and should always have been a relic-shrine, never apparently a tomb.

In addition to its primary and general use as a relic-shrine, the Tope in India was also very commonly used as a memorial tower to mark a sacred spot.* Of the 84,000 Stûpas which Aśoka is traditionally said to have erected, we gather from the Chinese travellers that one half at least were erected to mark spots where Buddha or some Bôdhisatwa had performed some miracle, or done something worthy of being recalled to the attention of the faithful.† When Messrs. Masson and Honigberger opened the Topes in Afghanistan, they found about one half contained relics; the remainder were "blind Topes," and contained nothing.‡ The same probably will be found to be the case, though to a less degree, in other countries. Where the Tumulus was a grave in reality, the chances are that not one in a hundred would be a memorial tower, though these last would probably be the largest and most important.

No. 7



Sepulchral Circle at Amravati.
From a Drawing in the Mackenzie Collection.

The rails which surround the Indian Topes are sometimes as important as the Tumuli themselves. In the case of Sanchi, and especially at Amravati, they are certainly more so. Like the Topes, their origin is sepulchral. The circles of rude stones found all over Europe certainly are so in most cases. They may sometimes enclose holy spots, and may possibly have in some instances been places of assembly, though this is improbable. Their application to the purposes of ancestral worship is, however, not only probable, but appropriate. Sometimes a circle of stones encloses a sepulchral mound, as at New Grange in Ireland,§

* Properly speaking, the Tumulus containing a relic ought always to be designated "Dagoba," a word derived from "Dhâtu," a relic, and "Garbha," literally the womb, but here used as the receptacle or enclosing shrine. The memorial tower ought, on the contrary, always to be called "Stûpa," from the Sanskrit word Stûpa, a cairn or heap. The difficulty in applying these terms is, that there are no external signs by which the two can be distinguished, and till the contents of all are ascertained, any attempt at precision might only lead to errors.

† If anyone had the patience to classify them, this probably would be the result, at least so it appears in reading the travels of Fahian and Hiouen Thsang.

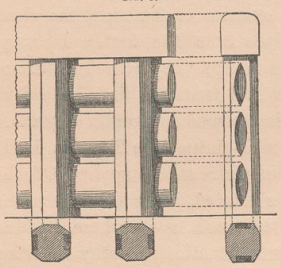
‡ Wilson's Ariana Antiqua, p. 68, et seqq.

§ Archæologia, 1770, and frequently since described.

and very frequently in Scandinavia* and Algeria.† In India rude stone circles are of frequent occurrence. In the neighbourhood of Amravati alone there are some hundreds of them (Woodcut, No. 7), and all are sepulchral; but, like the Topes when adopted by the Buddhists, they were sublimated into a symbol instead of a reality.

Another circumstance of interest connected with the rail at Sanchi is, that it is only the first step from the wooden form. Its construction and general appearance will be easily understood from the annexed diagram (Woodcut, No. 8) and the photographs. From these it will be perceived that there is nothing lithic in its character. The three intermediate rails must, during construction, have been held in their places by some means not now apparent. The next pillar was pushed laterally to receive their ends in the mortices prepared for them, and the top rail was then fitted on to a tenon on the top of the post (as at Stonehenge), so as to hold the post upright and in its place. All this is good carpentry, but it is very clumsy masonry.

No. 8.



Great Rail at Sanchi.
From a Drawing by Colonel Maisey.

In Ceylon the top and intermediate rails were omitted. One or three rows of upright stone posts were arranged round the Dagobas,‡ as in the Thûparâmaya (Woodcut, No. 9), but not joined together. In theory these look much more like the rows of detached rude stone pillars of northern climes. In practice, however, they too look as if they had just passed through the wooden stage. Their form is so slender, and their ornaments so essentially wooden, that they can hardly have assumed their present shape directly from a rude stone obelisk. My own impression is that they were used as the supports of tapistry, which on festal occasions was hung between them. When Fa-hian visited Ceylon (A.D. 405), he was present when the Tooth relic was carried to Mehentele, which, like the procession of Jagannâth, was the great annual festivity of the place. On these occasions both sides of the roads were hung with paintings of the 500 different manifestations of Buddha, "painted in different colours, and executed with such care as to appear living."§ This is so exactly doing on canvas what we, about the same time, find

No. 9.

View of the Thûparâmaya Dagoba, Anurâdhapura.

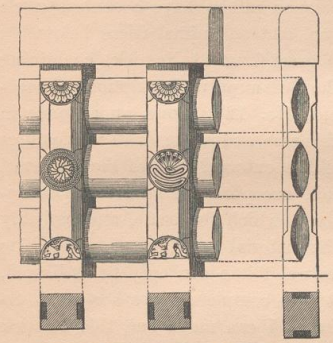
* Olaus Magnus, I. 29, and subsequently in every work on Sweden.
† Journal de la Société Archæologique de Constantine.
‡ Transactions Royal Asiatic Society, III. pl. 17, 18, 20, &c.; History of Architecture, II. Woodcut, 1007.
§ Foč-Kouč-Ki, p. 335.

done on stone at Amravati, that it seems hardly doubtful but that the one is the counterpart of the other, and for the Ceylonese form these tall thin pillars seem peculiarly appropriate.

The Buddhist rail, in the form in which it is found surrounding the great Tope at Sanchi, is especially interesting to Indian antiquaries, inasmuch as it was copied everywhere at that age, and became the favourite architectural ornament of the age. At Bhâjâ and Kârlee, in the early Caves at Ajanta and at Kenheri, all the string courses and friezes are mere copies of this rail. Like the wooden triglyph of the Doric order, it was repeated through centuries in stone. It occurs on the central Dagoba at Amravati, but not on the rails or any of the surrounding buildings. We do not find it, however, in any of the Caves of Ellora or Elephanta; indeed its use seems to have died out about the fourth or fifth century, but meanwhile its greater or less prevalence is no bad test of the real or comparative age of the building in which it is found.

The next step in the elaboration of these rails is found on that surrounding the second Tope at Sanchi (B 2 on Map). This Tope is relatively much taller in form than the great Tope, which is an almost certain sign of a more modern age, though it still may be anterior to the Christian era, and its rail earlier than the gates attached to the old rail of the great Tope. The innovation in this instance consisted in placing a centre disc on the pillar, ranging with the central rail, and two half discs at top and bottom* (Woodcut, No. 10). In the instance here given, too, the Serpent appears with the five heads, but whether this is a solitary instance or frequently repeated, we are not informed.

No. 10.



Rail of Second Tope at Sanchi.
From a Drawing by Colonel Maisey.

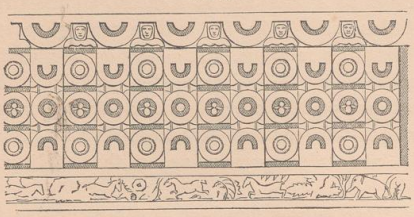
At Muttra, General Cunningham found fragments of a rail on which this form was repeated, with the addition of groups of sculpture, on what appeared to have been the angle columns. The rail which enclosed the great Bo Tree at Buddh-Gya was square in plan, measuring 131 feet by 90, and was ornamented as richly as that at Muttra. Neither of these rails have yet been published, nor have we any representation of many other fragments which exist in various other parts of India. This is to be regretted, as the next step is a very long one, and it must have taken some centuries of elaboration before even the richest of those mentioned became so highly ornamented as that at Amravati. At Amravati all the three rails have circular discs covered with a lotus or water leaf ornament externally, and with figures sculptured on their internal faces. The top rail also is adorned with a frieze of figures internally, and on the outer face with a procession of men bearing a roll such as is used in Buddhist processions in Burmah

* The probability seems to be that when the rail was in wood, nails with large heads or metal plates were used to keep the structure in form, as is still sometimes done in framed doors or gateways, and that these afterwards became ornaments, and were used architecturally, as we find it here and elsewhere.

at the present day. The whole rail, in fact, which is 14 feet in height, is covered with sculptured ornaments, and as it was at least 600 feet in length, it may perhaps be considered as the richest and most elaborate piece of screen work in the world.

The only connecting link which has been discovered between these two forms is in the Western Caves. In front of the great Cave at Kenheri, for instance, there is a low parapet wall, so weather-worn that it is difficult to make out its details. The annexed careful drawing (Woodcut, No. 11)—which, however, is fully confirmed by photographs—shows it to possess most of the essential features of the Amravati rail. Each of the three intermediate rails has a disc, and the octagon pillars have a central circle and two half-circles. There is a waving line at top, and an animal frieze below.

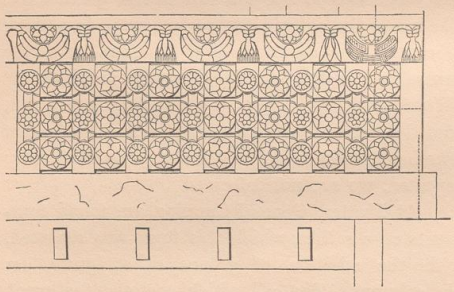
No. 11.



Dwarf Rail in front of Kenheri Cave.
From a Drawing by E. W. West, Esq.

Another rail similarly situated in front of the great Cave at Nassick, containing the Gotamiputra inscriptions (Woodcut, No. 12), shows an advance in this case, and possesses all the features of the external face of the Amravati rail, excepting of course the sculptures, which the scale, and probably the material would not admit of. Its animal frieze can only be indicated, it is so completely weather-worn. So far as I can make out, this Nassick rail is about the same age as that at Amravati; that at Kenheri may be either a little older or a little more modern. It is so weather-worn that it is difficult to determine which. My present impression is, that the Nassick rail belongs to the fourth, the other to the beginning of the fifth century of our era. They are both examples of the completed design, and certainly long subsequent to anything found at Sanchi or at Gya or Muttra.

No. 12.



Rail in front of Nassick Cave.
From a Drawing by E. W. West, Esq.

So far as is at present known, the Amravati rail, besides being the richest of detached examples, was the last of its race. After the fourth or fifth century the rail became attached to the Tope in the form of a range of pilasters, and the procession path, instead of being behind the rail, as at Sanchi, was on a terrace above the range of pilasters as at Manikyala.* In the Topes in Afghanistan it frequently

* History of Architecture, Woodcuts, 978, 979.

degenerated into a mere ornamental band at some height from the ground, and gradually lost all trace of its original significance.

When thoroughly investigated there are few architectural arrangements that will afford a more curious illustration of architectural development than these Buddhist rails. Already we can trace them from the rude circular sepulchral enclosure to such plain unadorned erections as those at Sanchi or Stonehenge, and thence to those of Buddh Gya; from that we can go on to that at Amravati, and till they lose themselves in the north of India. Many of the links are yet missing, though they will no doubt be easily supplied so soon as attention is really directed to the investigation.

Another interesting feature connected with these rails is the gateways attached to them. These are frequently represented in the sculptures at Amravati and the paintings at Ajanta, but the only examples known to exist standing are those at Sanchi. They are more modern than the rail to which they are attached, being slightly subsequent to the Christian era; but still betray, like everything else in this style of architecture, their wooden origin. Such a form could never have been invented in stone; and the reason they are not more frequently found, is probably that they were generally executed in wood, even when attached to stone rails. The Chinese Païloo is undoubtedly the lineal descendant of these gates; but even that is very generally at the present day constructed either wholly or partially in wood. It must, indeed, have required considerable courage to attempt such a construction in stone,* and the wonder is rather that several should have survived the wreck of eighteen centuries, rather than that so few should be found. The form of those at Sanchi and their sculptures form the first division of this work, and need not, therefore, be further enlarged on here; and as they are the only examples of their kind, no classification is possible.

The lâts or Stambhas form another group of early Buddhist monuments that must not be passed over. Four or five out of a larger number of those erected by Aśoka still exist, either standing or in recognized fragments. They form, however, such excellent rollers for the British road maker, and such capital sugar or rice mills for the native zemindar, that the wonder is that so many are left. All those of Aśoka are similar to one another,—circular stone shafts of a single block, 30 or 40 feet in length, and surmounted by a capital with the falling leaf or bell-shaped form found at Persepolis. This form of the capital, together with the Grecian or rather Assyrian honeysuckle ornament with which it is generally associated, are two of the most valuable ethnographic indications which the architecture of this age affords. As we have every reason to suppose that the real architecture of Aśoka's time remained essentially wooden in all its forms, it is curious to observe him copying the details of the architecture of the countries of his allies, Antiochus or Antigonus, in his first attempts at a more permanent style in stone. So far as we now know, the use of these foreign forms were confined to lâts and detached objects, and

* Henry of Huntingdon's description of the Trilithon at Stonehenge is curiously applicable here:—"Ubi lapides miræ magnitudinis in modum portarum elevati sunt, ita ut portæ portis superpositæ videantur."—Monument. Hist., p. 694.

were not employed in buildings, properly so called, till more than two centuries after their introduction, and then very much modified from their original forms. The object for which Aśoka's pillars were erected was, that certain edicts might be engraved upon them, which he desired to enforce on his people. Those at Pathari and Erun were erected by the Guptas in the fifth century, and mark the change that had taken place in Buddhist feeling. His own personal greatness and glorification was the object of the king who erected the more modern examples, and no longer a disinterested desire for the religious welfare of his people, which seems to have been Aśoka's only motive. Intermediate between these two periods we have numerous examples. Some cut in the rock, as at Karlee and Kenheri; but generally they are found attached to Topes. Two certainly at one time adorned each of the four entrances of the rail at both Sanchi and Amravati, and several of these still remain; most of them, however, are prostrate, though some are standing.

The capitals of those of Aśoka were generally surmounted by a single lion or elephant* or other animal. At Sanchi and Karlee we have four lions seated back to back on their capitals, and at the former place sometimes a single figure of a man standing. My impression is, that wherever four animals are found surmounting a column, they were not intended as the final ornament, but as the support of a wheel—probably in metal—or some other Buddhist emblem. In other instances we have four men, and these overshadowed by the seven-headed serpent. At Amravati they seem more generally to have been crowned by miniature Dagobas, but sometimes also by men, and by other emblems.† As all these will be more particularly described in the sequel, when this occurs in the Plates, it is not necessary to dwell more on their peculiarities in this place.

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* History of Architecture, Woodcuts, 969 and 970.

† From some photographs recently received from Nepal, it appears that the practice still prevails there. The statues of their kings stand or are seated on the capitals of tall pillars, sometimes with metal umbrellas ever their heads, and in one instance at least the king is shaded by the Serpent hood. This in the nineteenth century!

CHAPTER II.

Topes at Sanchi.—(Plates I. and II.)

The Topes at Sanchi, which it is proposed to illustrate in the following pages, form part of a great group of these monuments situated between the towns of Bhilsa and Bhopal, in Central India. They extend over a district seventeen miles east and west, and about ten miles north and south, in five or six different groups, and number altogether between forty and fifty tumuli of various dimensions. The smallest of them are no doubt mere burying places of local chiefs, erected over their ashes, and contain no objects of interest. Others are Dagobas, or relic shrines, in the correct sense of the word; while the great Tope itself (A, Plate I.) is a Chaitya or Stûpa,* erected apparently to commemorate some event in Buddhist history, or to mark some sacred spot.†

The great Tope at Sanchi (Plate II.) consists, first, of a basement 121 feet in diameter and 14 feet in height. On the top of this is a terrace or procession path, 5 feet 6 inches wide, within which the dome or tumulus itself rises in the form of a truncated hemisphere to a height of 39 feet. This was originally coated with chunan to a thickness of about four inches, but whether ornamented with painting or moulded plaster ornaments cannot be ascertained, owing to the very fragmentary state in which the coating now exists. On the top of the dome was a level platform, measuring 34 feet across. This was surrounded by a circular railing of stones, some of the pillars of which are still found among the ruins. Within this was a square Tee or simulated relic box, consisting of sixteen square pillars with rails, and measuring 11 feet 6 inches each way. Within this again was a circular support for the umbrella which invariably crowned these monuments. When Captain Fell visited this monument in 1819,‡ all this was *in situ* and nearly perfect; but shortly afterwards some bungling amateurs dug into the monument, and so completely ruined it, that the form of its superstructure can now only with difficulty be made out.

The most remarkable feature, however, connected with this monument is the rail which surrounds it at a distance of 9 feet 6 inches from the base, except on the south, where the double flight of steps leading to the berm or procession path reduces the width to 6 feet 4 inches. As before mentioned, it is 11 feet in height, and consisted apparently of 100 pillars, exclusive of the gateways. Each of these was apparently the gift of an individual, and even the rails between them seem to have been presented

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* Vide ante, page 79.

† The whole of these Topes were carefully opened and examined by General A. Cunningham and Lieut.-Colonel Maisey in 1851, and the results published by the first-named officer, in his work on the Bhilsa Topes, by Smith, Elder, & Co. in 1854.

‡ J. A. S. B., vol. III. p. 490, et seqq. General Taylor, of the Bengal Cavalry, who was probably the first British officer that visited the monument, confirms the account given by Captain Fell. He discovered the Tope when encamped near it, during the campaign of 1818. Three of its gates were then standing, and a great part of the Tee still *in situ*.

by different persons. General Cunningham collected 176 short inscriptions from this rail,* all by different individuals, and each recording that the member on which it was engraved was the gift of some pious person, male or female, but all unfortunately unknown to fame. Not one, at least, has yet been satisfactorily identified.

There is absolutely no sculpture on the rail, but fortunately four gateways were added to it about the Christian era, and these are covered with sculptured decorations of the most elaborate kind. Two of these are still standing, and the fragments of the other two are to be seen lying on the ground. The most perfect is the northern entrance, the rear elevation of which forms the frontispiece to this volume. The total height to the top of the central ornament is 33 feet 6 inches. The height to the under side of the lowest rail is 18 feet 6 inches in the centre, and the width of the opening between the two pillars is 7 feet clear. The greatest width is across the lowest rail, and measures within a fraction of 20 feet. The whole, as will be seen from the frontispiece and the photographs, is of a singularly wooden form, and is jointed and morticed together more like a piece of carpentry than a structure of stone.†

Number 2. Tope (B, in Plate I.) is very much smaller than that just described, being only 39 feet in diameter. It springs from a basement 6 feet in height, supporting a terrace or berm 5 feet 4 inches wide. Its section is that of a hemisphere stilted to the extent of $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet. Its proportional of height, therefore, is 29 feet to 39, or as 3 to 4 nearly; that of the great Tope was only as 1 to 2, showing an advance, which is an almost certain indication of a more modern age.‡ The rail is 7 feet 6 inches in height, and elliptical in plan, in order to allow a clear space of 8 feet as well in front of the ramp as round the other parts of the building. The enclosure thus measures 69 feet by $74\frac{1}{2}$ feet. As before explained, the rail is to some extent ornamented (Woodcut, No. 10), but has no gateways of the same imposing character as those of the great Tope. The angle pillars are, however, ornamented as well as the intermediate rails, and afford some indications of great value. (See Plates XLII. and XLIII., which will be noticed hereafter.)

As before mentioned, the great Tope seems to have been a "monumental tower." Nothing was found in it. This one, on the contrary, contained four steatite boxes, in which were placed relics "of Kâśyapa Gotra, missionary to the whole of the Himawanta," and of Madhyama, both these names being mentioned in the Mahawanso as missionaries sent by Aśoka to the Himalaya country,§ thus confirming to the fullest possible extent the inscriptions on the box. Another contained relics of Mogaliputra, who was the head of the Buddhist church at the third convocation (B.C. 241), and altogether the Tope possessed memorials of ten of the principal personages of the Buddhist community during the reign of Asoka. The three named above were well known before the Tope was opened, the other seven were less famous, but their connection can now be traced.‖

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* Cunningham, Bhilsa Topes, 235, et seq.

† All the above dimensions are taken from Colonel Maisey's MS. notes.

‡ Cunningham, Bhilsa Topes, p. 177.

§ Mahawanso, p. 74.

‖ These particulars are taken from General Cunningham's work, pages 285, et seqq. He and Colonel Maisey seem to have divided the "find" between them. Colonel Maisey's share is now on exhibition at South Kensington Museum; General Cunningham's is in his own house, Clarendon Road, Kensington.

There is another Tope at Sanchi, which is illustrated to some extent in this work. It stands near to the great Tope, and on the same platform (D 3, in plan, Plate I.) At first sight it appears only as a formless cairn of stones, but on examination it was found to consist of a dome 40 feet in diameter, standing on a base measuring 52 feet across and 6 feet high. The dome was originally crowned by a pedestal or Tee 4½ feet square, supporting a Chatta about 3½ feet diameter. Some fragments of the Rail are scattered about, but the principal ornament is the fragment of one of the Gateways, which is still standing (Plate XXI.,) and though only about half the dimensions of those of the great Tope, is quite equal to them in elegance of design or richness of ornament.

The great interest of this Tope, or rather Dagoba, is that it was found to contain relics of Śáriputra and Mahá Mogalána, two of the principal disciples and followers of Buddha himself.* These were probably the most precious possessions of the fraternity at Sanchi.

As the other Topes at or about Sanchi are not illustrated in this work, it would be tedious and unnecessary to dwell on them here. They are all described and delineated in General Cunningham's work, to which the reader is referred for details. Some of them are of great value for the elucidation of the history of Buddhist art, but none equal either in elaboration or in interest to the three just enumerated.

History.

Although there are no data which enable us to ascertain positively the dates of the Sanchi Topes, there are certain indications which fix them within certain limits with a reasonable amount of certainty. One of the most distinct of these is in an inscription on a representation of a Tope on the Southern Gateway (Plate XVII.) now fallen and lying on the ground. It is to the effect that the beam on which it was found was "the gift of Ânanda, the son of Vasishṭa, in the reign of Sri Śâtakarṇi."† Unfortunately for our argument, there are several kings of the Ândhra dynasty who bore this name. The first reigned A.D. 10 to 28, according to my calculation; the second 64 to 120 A.D., and his long and prosperous reign would seem to afford a presumption that it was during his lifetime that these Gateways were erected. General Cunningham and Colonel Maisey both arrived at the conclusion that it was during the reign of the first that they were added to the Rail,‡ and they may be correct, but a second question arises on this point. The Gateways are not all of the same age. There is a considerable difference in style, and Colonel Maisey thinks the Gateway bearing this inscription is the oldest. On the whole I am inclined to agree with his reasoning on the point, though the data available are not sufficient to justify a positive opinion being expressed regarding it. I feel, however, little doubt but that the four Gateways of the great Tope, and the Gateway of No. 3, were all erected within the limits of the first century after Christ, and I think the probability is that the South Gateway belonged to the first thirty years of it;

* All these particulars are taken from Cunningham, Bhilsa Topes, p. 295, et seqq.

† Cunningham, Bhilsa Topes, p. 264.

‡ Bhilsa Topes, p. 265.

in other words, was being carved while Christ was preaching at Jerusalem. The presumption is confirmed to the fullest possible extent by the style of architecture and of the sculpture, though it is difficult to make this argument available with those who are not intimately acquainted with the Caves of Karlee, Ajanta, and other contemporaneous examples.

The inscriptions on the Rails, though so numerous, do not contain a single historical name that can be recognized with certainty; but the style of the characters in which they are written is very similar to that used in the inscriptions of Aśoka, and never employed,—so far as is at present known,—after the Christian era.

For the Tope itself we have neither inscription nor architectural mouldings, and our Chinese travellers fail us here, as neither of them visited Sanchi, nor did any other mediæval writer, and no tradition exists among the Brahminical or Mahomedan inhabitants of the country as to the origin or date of this memorial of a long-forgotten faith.

In this difficulty the Mahawanso helps us a little.* It relates that when Aśoka was sent by his father to be governor of Ujjéni he tarried some time at Chaityagiri, or, as it is called elsewhere, Wessanagara,† the modern Besnagar, close to Sanchi. He there married Devî, the daughter of the chief, and by her had twin sons, Ujjenio and Mahindo, and afterwards a daughter, Sanghamitâ. The two last named afterwards entered the priesthood, and played a most important part in the conversion of Ceylon to Buddhism. Afterwards "when Mahindo visited his royal mother at Chaitiyagiri," before setting out for Ceylon, she established the thero in the superb Chaitya Vihâra, which had been erected by herself.‡ In all this it is true there is no mention of the Chaitya itself, and it may have existed before Aśoka's time, but there is absolutely no proof of this, and till some one stone monument is discovered in India with an ascertained date anterior to 250 B.C., we must be content to commence our history there. On the other hand, the capital of the pillar (Plate XXXIX. Fig. 1.) and the lions which surmount it are so similar to the works we know to be Aśoka's elsewhere, that we may safely assume they belong to his age. There is also a mutilated inscription, on which General Cunningham reads doubtfully his monumental title of Devânampriya.§ If this is really his, it settles the question that the Tope was erected by him, though for what purpose he has not attempted to explain.

Without going further into the evidence, which is not necessary in this place, it may fairly be assumed that the great Tope is one of the 84,000 which Asoka is traditionally said to have erected. If so, it is the only one of them all still remaining in India, and the oldest stone building in the country.‖

The Rail may have been commenced immediately afterwards by the faithful of the congregation, and completed in 50 or 100 years. The Gateways were probably added to the then existing Rail at the time when the languishing religion of Buddha

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* Mahawanso, p. 76.

† Turnour, Pali Annals, J. A. S. B., VII., p. 930.

‡ Mahawanso, p. 76.

§ Bhilsa Topes, p. 259.

‖ General Cunningham's dates are, for the Gates, 19 to 37 A.D.; for the Rail, 250 B.C.; and for the Tope itself, 500 B.C. (page 270, et seq.) With regard to the two first I agree with him, but I think he exaggerates the age of the Tope, without assigning any valid reason for so doing. Assuming the Tope to have been erected by Aśoka, which I see no reason for doubting, this would hardly interfere with his date for the Rail.

was restored to its pristine position by the eloquence of Nâgârjuna, backed by the political influence of the Turushka Kanishka. Everything about them seems to indicate such a revival. If I might be allowed to state what I cannot prove, I would suggest that they must have been completed before the death of Śâlivâhana, 78 A.D.

The superb Vihâra erected by the lovely Devî was, I am afraid, entirely of wood, and no trace of it consequently now remains.

The age of the second Tope seems intermediate between these dates. Its taller form shows it to be more modern than the great one, and the more ornate character of its Rail is a strong indication in the same direction. On the other hand, the character of its sculptures and the form of the letters in its inscription show that it is older than the Gateways of the large Tope, if we might guess, say by 100 to 150 years. It cannot well be more, for the ten persons whose relics it contains were all alive in the reign of Aśoka; and men do not become saints, and little bits of bone or beads that belonged to them do not become valuable, till their corporeal form is forgotten. Had they been buried here, it would have been otherwise; but we must allow a hundred years to have passed since their death before these relics were enclosed in steatite boxes and a Dagoba built over them. As a mean date I would be inclined to place No. 2 Tope at from 100 to 150 years B.C.

The third Tope is so ruined—as mentioned above—that there is nothing in its architecture that would enable us to fix its date. The Gateway may be of the same age as those of the great Tope, or slightly more modern; but even if this were ascertained it would not enable us to determine the age of the Tope itself. It may have been added afterwards, as those of the great Tope certainly were. The fact of its containing relics of the companions of Buddha is equally useless for the purpose of fixing its date. They may have been brought here at any time. If, however, I am correct in a suggestion I will make in describing Plate XXXVIII., it may go some way towards settling this question. My impression is, that the scenes there depicted have reference to the acquirement or recovery of these very relics; and if this is so, the erection of this Tope is probably about contemporary with that of the greater one. If it should turn out as I believe that Aśoka is the hero of the sculptures of the historical scenes in the Gateways of the great Tope, the probability is that, after erecting it to commemorate some miracle or event, he sought further to sanctify the place by adding a relic shrine. According to this hypothesis, he conquered or recovered these relics from their original possessors, and erected this smaller Tope as a chapel for their reception. The Gateway, in that case, is at least two centuries more modern than the building to which it is attached.

There are six or seven other small Topes on the same platform as the great Tope (Plate I.) They are all, however, now merely formless heaps of loose stones, and none of them yielded any results to their explorers.

Ethnography.

It would add very much to the clearness of what follows, if, before proceeding to describe the individual bas-reliefs, it were possible to determine even approximately the races of the people represented in the sculptures at Sanchi, as well as to what epoch of history the events depicted should be ascribed.

Even on the most cursory glance, there is no difficulty in discriminating between the two principal races who take the most prominent part in all the events depicted. There is a third, probably a fourth, race represented, but as they occur only once, there are no sufficient means of comparison to determine who they may be, and it will therefore be sufficient to allude to them when describing Plates XXVIII. and XXX.

Of the other two there can be little difficulty in recognizing one as "Hindus," meaning by that term the civilized race who, at the time when the Gateways were erected, occupied the valley of the Ganges, and who, from their capitals of Ayodhyâ and Indraprastha or Pâṭaliputra (Palibothra), had been the dominant class in India for at least 2,000 years before the time to which we are now referring. Originally these people were no doubt pure immigrant Aryans; but before Śâkya Muni preached his reform, their blood had become so mixed with that of the aboriginal and inferior races as to render the success of that new gospel possible. They still, however, retained the civilization and the pre-eminence which the original intellectual superiority of the Aryans had imparted to them.

In the sculptures they are easily recognized by their costume. This consists of the dhoti, wrapped round the loins in precisely the same manner as it is at the present day; sometimes they have also a chudder over their shoulders; and all wear the turban. This last seems to be mingled with the hair, and twisted into the most fantastic shapes, more resembling the form now seen in Burmah than those usual in Bengal; but still it is fundamentally always a long strip of cloth wound round the head in what was no doubt then considered an elegant and fashionable form.

The costume of the women is more difficult to describe, though this is principally in consequence of its scantiness. Both at Sanchi and Amravati the women always wear enormous bangles about the ancles and wrists, and generally strings of beads round the neck, but their body clothing generally is limited to a bead belt round the body below the waist. From this belt slips of cloth are sometimes suspended, more generally at the sides or behind than in front, and sometimes also a cloth, worn something like the dhoti of the male sex, is also added, but when that is the case it is represented in the sculptures generally as absolutely transparent.

The most remarkable part of the female costume is the head dress, which is as voluminous as the body dress is scant. It is represented, Figs. 1., 2., and 3., Plate III., and seems to consist of two long plaits of hair mixed with beads, and a thick roll of cloth, so as to form a sort of tippet, almost covering the whole of the back of the wearer.

It is, however, not only in the Topes that this absence of dress is so conspicuous. In all the sculptures at Karlee, or Ellora, or Mahavellipore, or in the paintings in Ajanta, the same peculiarity is observable. Everywhere, indeed, before the Mahomedan conquest, nudity in India conveyed no sense of indecency. The wife and mother of Buddha are at times represented in this manner. The queen on her throne, the female disciples of Buddha, listening to his exhortations, and on every public occasion on which women take part in what is going on, the costume is the same.* It is equally remarkable that in those days these unveiled females seem to have taken part in every public transaction and show, and to have mixed with the men as freely as women do in Europe at the present day.†

All this is the more remarkable, as in Buddhist books modesty of dress in women is frequently insisted upon. In the Dulva, for instance, a story is told of the King of Kalinga presenting to the King of Kośala (probably Oude) a piece of muslin, which afterwards fell into the hands of a lewd priestess. She, it is said, wore it in public, while it was so thin that she, notwithstanding this, appeared naked, to the great scandal of all who witnessed the exhibition.‡ The probability is, that the story and the book that contains it are of very much more modern date than our sculptures. It certainly is in direct conflict with their evidence.

The other race above alluded to is very easily distinguished from that just described, both in appearance and in their social status. The costume of the men consists of a kilt, literally a kilt, not a cloth wrapped round the loins, but so far as can be judged from the sculptures, needle made, and fastened by a buckle or string. They also wear a cloak or tippet, which seems to be equally shaped and sewn, a thing apparently utterly unknown in India till the fashion of shaped garments was introduced by the Mahomedans.§ Their head dress is also very peculiar; either it is that their hair was twisted into a long rope or plait like a Chinaman's, and then bound round the head in a conical form, or a piece of cloth or rope was similarly twisted. Their most marked peculiarity, however, is that they all wear beards, whereas no single individual of the other race either at Sanchi or Amravati has a trace of a beard or of even a moustache. This is the more remarkable, as Nearchus tells us that the Indians daub their beards with various colours, so that some are white, others black, some red, some purple, and others green! ‖ Curtius tells us they never shave.¶ Diodorus assures us that they nourish their beards during their whole lives, and received this custom from Bacchus, whom they call the bearded deity; and Strabo tells us they suffer their beards to grow without cutting, and dye them various

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* When we first visited Japan in 1860, the females were seen "tubbing" in the public streets in the open light of day. Whatever it may be now, nudity conveyed no idea of indecency to the Japanese ten years ago.

† In India there are some tribes where the females still go nearly naked. The Putooas, for instance, described by Mr. Samuells, J. A. S. B., XXV. p. 295, have no other dress than a string tied round their waists, from which every morning they suspend a fresh bunch of leaves in front and another behind; literally the costume of our first parents in Paradise. In the south of India some of the females, of the races on the west coast especially, wear nothing above the waist, in curious contrast to the countries where the Mahomedans have held sway, where the women are now generally secluded, or, if appearing in public, are completely veiled.

‡ Asiatic Researches, XX. p. 85.

§ Buchanan Hamilton, in Martin's Eastern India, II. 699.

‖ Arrian, Indica, XVI.

¶ Q. Curtius, VIII. 9. 22.

** Diodorus, IV. 5.

colours by way of ornament;* and Solinus gives the same testimony. It is true all these authorities may have copied from one another, and that they may only refer to one people on the banks of the Indus, but the shaven condition of all the Hindus on our monuments and the universal prevalence of beards with the other race are very remarkable.†

The costume of the women differs from those of the Hindus even more than that of the men. They wear a petticoat striped like that of the other sex, and apparently gathered in at the knees, so as to form a neat and modest dress, and a cloak or tippet similar to that of the men is thrown generally over one shoulder so as to leave one breast bare, but sometimes both are covered. On their heads they wear a neat and elegant turban (Plate III., Figs. 4. and 5.). They wear no bangles nor ornaments of any kind.

Who then are these people? From their dwelling in the woods and the peculiarity of their costume both General Cunningham‡ and Colonel Maisey are inclined to regard them as priests or ascetics, though the latter remarks, "they are nowhere "seen worshipping Topes, trees, wheels, or the disc and crescent symbols. In one "compartment they may be seen worshipping the serpent in a fire temple,"§ &c. It is curious that in their only appearance at Amravati (Plate LXX.) they are equally worshipping the serpent, but never mixed with those paying respect to the other objects of adoration.

After a careful study of all the bas-reliefs bearing on this subject, it does not appear to me doubtful that the sculptors at Sanchi meant to represent this people as the aboriginal inhabitants of the country of Malwa, to whom the Hindus came either as conquerors or as missionaries. The Topes were erected of course and Gateways sculptured by the latter race, and they represent the other as always inferior and engaged in servile employments, but they do not represent them as converted to Buddhism. As just mentioned, they nowhere join in worship with the superior race, and the only act of adoration in which they are engaged either here or at Amravati is the adoration of the five-headed Naga. This is the more remarkable, as we shall see hereafter, that both at Sanchi and Amravati the Naga is the tutelary deity and emblem of the other, or at least of another race.

The circumstances which apparently induced General Cunningham and Colonel Maisey to regard them as priests, was that their costume resembled that of ascetics in Burmah and other Buddhist countries at the present day. This hardly, however, seems a sufficient reason for the purpose. From their appearing so frequently on Buddhist monuments, we may certainly assume that they were converted eventually to Buddhism, and being a tribe dwelling in woods their priests may have become forest ascetics as contradistinguished from the monastic orders of the more civilized race. If this were so they may have retained the form of dress, and it may have become the fashionable costume of ascetics in future ages. One such certainly

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* Strabo, XV. 1024.

† Only two instances of bearded men occur at Amravati. Both of them appear to be the same people as those so frequently represented at Sanchi.

‡ Bhilsa Topes, pp. 204. 208. 210, et passim.

§ M. S., 20.

appears at Amravati (Plate LXXXVI.), but at Sanchi they seem most unmistakeably to be represented as a tribe, not as a priesthood.

It would be extremely convenient if there were any local name which we could use in speaking of this people. To call them, however, either Gonds or Khonds, Bhils, Meenas, or by any other name, would be begging the question, and putting forward an hypothesis for which no grounds have yet been obtained. In the following pages I propose to call them Dasyus, not because there is any local or traditional authority for such a name, but because in the Vedas and the heroic poems such a term seems to be applied to the aboriginal people of India as contra-distinguished from the Aryans.* It is here used for non-Aryan as distinguished from Aryan, and involves no theory and interferes with no name appropriated to any known tribe, and as such may be conveniently employed till some better is suggested.

If I were asked to give them a distinctive name I would unhesitatingly suggest Takshaka, or, to adopt Colonel Tod's spelling, Takshac, as the most appropriate, his description of that race seeming to apply in almost every particular to this people. They were essentially Serpent worshippers, "Naga and Takshac being synonymous " appellations in Sanscrit for the Snake, and the Takshac is the celebrated Nagvansa " of the early heroic history of India."† They were also essentially the artificers and architects of India,‡ and lastly, they are known to have possessed Assergurh § in this neighbourhood in the Middle Ages, and may have been settled there from time immemorial. Their original seat was Taxila, which was also the metropolis of Serpent Worship, and the spot whence it spread all over India.‖ On the whole, however, it is probably better to avoid affixing any definitive name to them in the present stage of the inquiry.¶

Sculptures.

Although anyone may, by a careful study of the drawings and photographs, learn to discriminate between the different races of men represented in the sculptures, the task becomes very much more difficult when we attempt to ascertain what particular event each bas-relief represents, or to give a name to each individual scene. About one-half of the bas-reliefs at Sanchi, however, represent religious acts, such as the worship of the Dagoba or of Trees. Once or twice the Wheel is the object of adoration, and once the Serpent. In all these cases there is no doubt or difficulty. There are also half-a-dozen scenes that can be identified with more or less certainty as representing events in the life of Śâkya Muni, and a considerable number of representations of scenes in domestic life, regarding which it will probably be impossible ever to feel sure that we know who the actors in them are. Nor is it of

* I make this statement on the authority of Muir's Sanskrit Texts, vol. I., 2nd edition, passim. See also Vivien de St. Martin, Géographie du Véda, p. 98, et seqq.

† Tod's Annals of Rajasthan, I., p. 104.

‡ Ibid., p. 671.

§ Ibid., p. 105.

‖ Cunningham's Report, 1863–64, p. 5.

¶ Another element of identification is to be found in their beards. The Greeks, who practically only knew the Indians of the North West (Taxila), represent the Indians as bearded. These people are the only ones in our sculptures with hair on their faces.

much importance here. Eating, drinking, and making love are occupations so common among mankind, that it matters little who the parties are who are so engaged in the Sanchi sculptures. But besides all these, there are several important bas-reliefs representing historical events, which it would be very interesting to identify if it were practicable. Generally the lowest architrave in each of the Gateways is so occupied, sometimes both in front and back, as in the Northern Gate, and the two lowest in front of the Eastern, and two historical scenes are represented in Plate XXXVIII., one from the Western, the other from the Southern Gateway, both of which have fallen.

The two latter represent the siege of a city in order to recover and to obtain possession of some relics, and the triumphal return of the army with the precious deposit; and, as will be afterwards explained, it is probable that the caskets contain the identical relics that were enshrined in No. 3 Tope, and are now in this country. Be that as it may, the question is, who is the hero of the fight? and who brought home the relics to Sanchi? Assuming the sculpture to have been executed about the Christian era, does it represent a transaction in the reign of Aśoka more than two hundred years earlier, or did the king who erected the gates order these bas-reliefs to be executed to commemorate some great exploit of his own? If the king had engraved his own name on the gate, the latter would have been the probable solution, but the inscription states that the sculpture is the "gift of Ânanda, the son of Vasishṭha, in the reign of Śrî Sâtakarṇi." On the whole, therefore, considering that it is a religious monument, and the general self-denying character of Buddhism, it is more probable that the events represented had passed into the domain of religious history before they were sculptured on the Gateways, and that they were actions sanctified by time.

Unfortunately the other inscriptions, though so numerous, afford us no assistance in this inquiry. It is probably correct to assert that there is not one single inscription, either at Sanchi or Amravati, which has any reference to the subject about or upon which it is engraved. They all record gifts, and gifts only, and it would be as reasonable to look for an explanation of the Resurrection or the Last Supper from the inscription of a memorial window in modern times as to try and find out from those on the Topes what the sculptures represent.*

We are thus left pretty much to conjecture; but we shall probably not err far if we consider Aśoka as the hero in all, or nearly all, the purely historical bas-reliefs. Not only was Aśoka the great apostle of Buddhism before the Christian era, but, as before mentioned, he was especially connected personally with Sanchi. He resided here during the life of his father, when he was only governor of Ujjain, and before his conversion to Buddhism. He married the daughter of the Seṭṭhî, or Śhreshṭî, of the place, and she at least continued to reside here after her children

* Another circumstance of a mechanical and it is hoped temporary nature adds to our difficulties here. When Colonel Maisey was at Sanchi he was unable to procure wood either in sufficient quantities or of sufficient lengths to get up near enough to draw the historical bas-reliefs. We are forced, therefore, to depend on Lieutenant Waterhouse's photographs, which are on too small a scale to be distinct, and on Colonel Maisey's verbal descriptions for our information. Both are excellent in their way, but till they are photographed to a larger scale, or drawn, they cannot be compared with the others in such a manner as to detect minute differences, on which the whole question frequently hinges.

had grown up, and had not only been converted, but had assumed the priesthood in the Buddhist hierarchy. It was probably, therefore, through the influence of Aśoka that the inhabitants of Malwa first heard of Buddhism, and if so, there is no one so likely to have become a popular local hero, nor any one whose acts would more probably be represented on the religious edifices of the place.

To this may be added, that the bas-reliefs, in so far as they can be made out, do represent just such an advent of the Hindus, and the conversion of the natives of the country to Buddhism, as is involved in this hypothesis. It serves at least to explain all we now know of them, and may, therefore, be usefully employed till at least some other is started from information not at present available.

It may seem premature, before describing the sculptures, to attempt anything like a criticism of their merits. It may, however, add to the intelligibility of what follows to point out how extremely different these are to the usual sculptures brought home from India, or represented in Hindu drawings. Neither at Sanchi nor at Amravati are there any of those many-armed or many-headed divinities who form the staple of the modern Hindu Pantheon. There are none of those monstrous combinations of men with heads of elephants or lions or boars. All the men and women represented are human beings, acting as men and women have acted in all times, and the success or failure of the representation may consequently be judged of by the same rules as are applicable to sculptures in any other place or country. Notwithstanding this, the mode of treatment is so original and so local, that it is difficult to assign it any exact position in comparison with the arts of the Western World. It certainly, as a sculptural art, is superior to that of Egypt, but as far inferior to the art as practised in Greece. The sculptures at Amravati are perhaps as near in scale of excellence to the contemporary art of the Roman empire under Constantine, as to any other that could be named; or, rather, they should be compared with the sculptures of the early Italian renaissance, as it culminated in the hands of Ghiberti, and before the true limits between the provinces of sculpture and painting were properly understood.

The case is somewhat different as regards the sculptures at Sanchi. These are ruder, but more vigorous. If they want the elegance of design at Amravati, they make up for it by a distinctness and raciness of expression which is wanting in these more refined compositions. The truth seems to be that the Sanchi sculptures, like everything else there, betray the influence of the freedom derived from wood carving, which, there can be little doubt, immediately preceded these examples, and formed the school in which they were produced.

There can now be very little if any doubt but that this school of Indian art owes its origin to the influence of the Greek kingdom of Bactria. Of late years considerable collections have been made of Buddhist sculptures from ruined Topes in the neighbourhood of Peshawer.* These are in many respects extremely similar to those at Sanchi, but more closely allied to the classical type. In many of the

* I speak confidently of these sculptures, as I have photographs of a considerable number, and specimens of others exist in this country. Unfortunately, no means exist as yet of conveying a knowledge of them to the public.

Punjab examples the costumes and mode of treatment is almost purely western, but we are always able to trace the steps by which the Grecian design becomes Indianized, and changed into the type we find at Sanchi and Amravati.

Perhaps, however, the crowning point of interest in these sculptures is, that they complete our knowledge of the history of stone art in India. Hitherto we have been groping our way backwards with uncertain steps, never knowing at what conclusions we might ultimately arrive. As far back as the tenth or eleventh centuries we had abundant examples of structural buildings, and we found that each was perfect in the direct ratio of the age. The history of art in India, so far as we could trace it, was written in decay, and finding each example more perfect than the one that followed it, there was reasonable hope that some day we should find something that would stand comparison with the arts of the Western World.

Beyond the tenth century we were left for guidance almost wholly to the rock-cut examples. These, however, owing to the coarseness of the material out of which they were excavated, and the difficulties inherent in Cave art, could not be depended upon as trustworthy indications of the state of refinement of the arts in their age. In so far, however, as architecture is concerned, we learned from them that stone was first thought of as a building material about the age of Aśoka, certainly after the time of Alexander, and the commencement of the first intimate intercourse between the Western and the Eastern World.*

The knowledge that we have now gained of the early history of the art of sculpture in India, from the study of the examples at Sanchi and Amravati, enables us to point with equal certainty to Bactria as the fountain head from which it was introduced. We can thence follow it through the time when, from being a rude and imitative art, it rose to its highest degree of refinement in the fourth or fifth century of our era, at which time it had also become essentially localized. From that point our history is easy, though somewhat discouraging, from its downward tendency towards the present state of art in India. We are now also able to trace the Yavanas step by step, as they penetrated over the Upper Indus, and spread their influence and their arts across the continent of India to the very shores of the Bay of Bengal, at Cuttack, and Amravati. With almost equal certainty we can follow them as they crossed the bay, and settled themselves in Cambodia and Java. But the people who did all this were not Greeks themselves, and did not carry with them the Pantheon of Greece or Rome, or the tenets of Christianity. They were a people of Turanian race, and the form of worship they took with them and introduced everywhere was that of Trees and Serpents, fading afterwards into a modified form of Buddhism.

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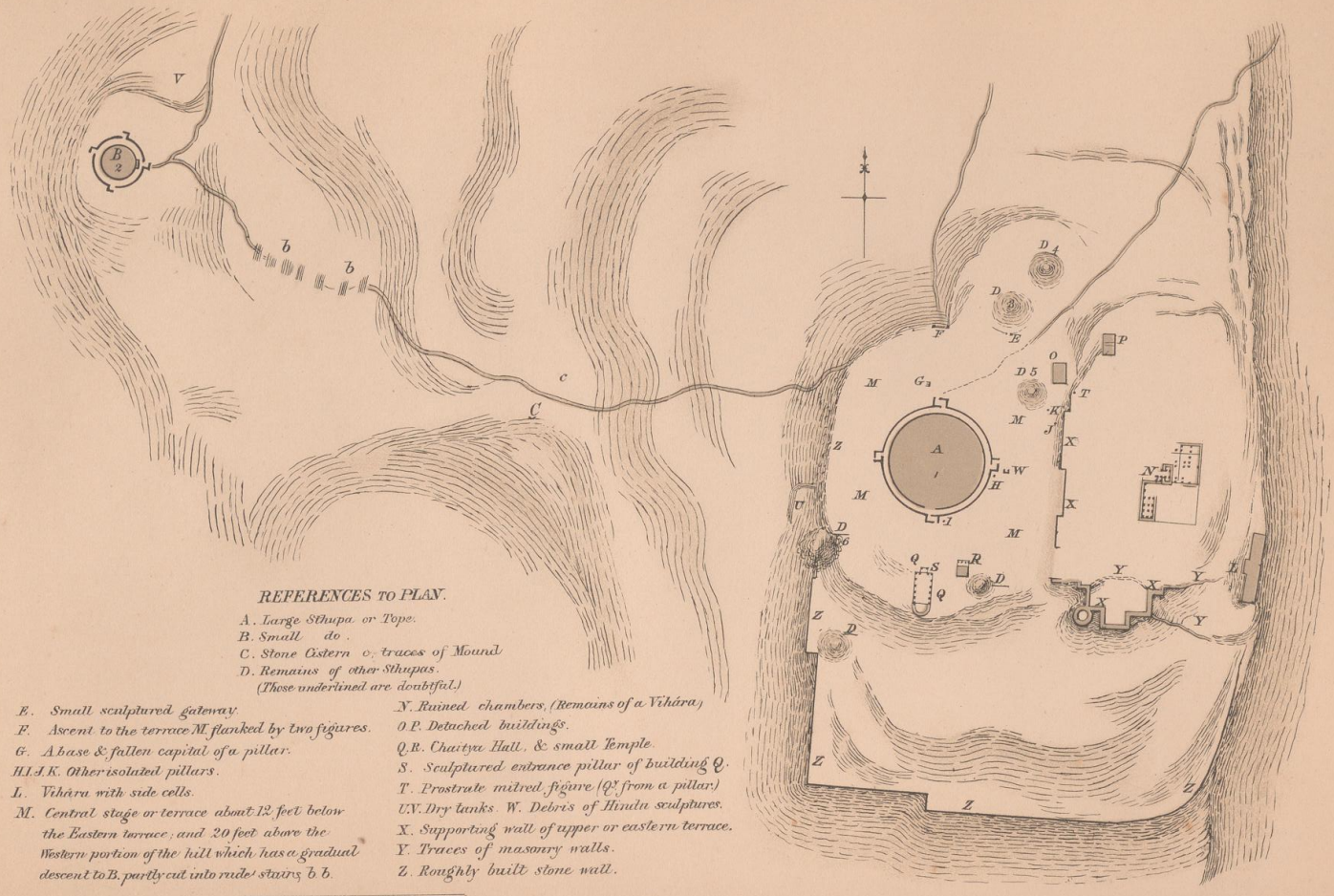
* See History of Architecture, by the Author, II. 455, et seqq.

PLATE I.



REFERENCES TO PLAN.

A. Large Sthupa or Tope.
B. Small do.
C. Stone Cistern or traces of Mound.
D. Remains of other Sthupas.
(Those underlined are doubtful.)

E. Small sculptured gateway.
F. Ascent to the terrace M flanked by two figures.
G. A base & fallen capital of a pillar.
H.I.J.K. Other isolated pillars.
L. Vihára with side cells.
M. Central stage or terrace about 12 feet below the Eastern terrace; and 20 feet above the Western portion of the hill which has a gradual descent to B. partly cut into rude stairs b b.
N. Ruined chambers, (Remains of a Vihára)
O.P. Detached buildings.
Q.R. Chaitya Hall, & small Temple.
S. Sculptured entrance pillar of building Q.
T. Prostrate mitred figure (Q? from a pillar)
U.V. Dry tanks. W. Debris of Hindu sculptures.
X. Supporting wall of upper or eastern terrace.
Y. Traces of masonry walls.
Z. Roughly built stone wall.

100 50 0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000 1100 1200 Feet

LT COL. MAISEY DEL.

W. BRIGGS, LITH.

GROUND PLAN OF THE RUINS AT SANCHI.

GROUND PLAN OF THE RUINS AT SANCHI.

FIG. 1.

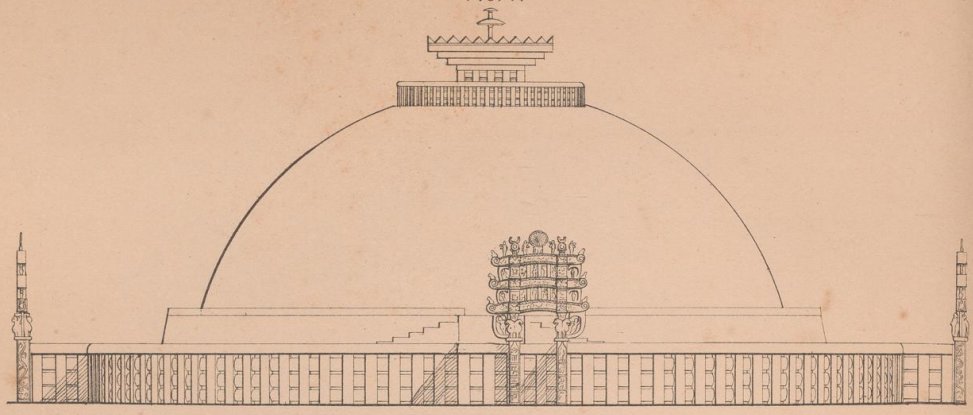
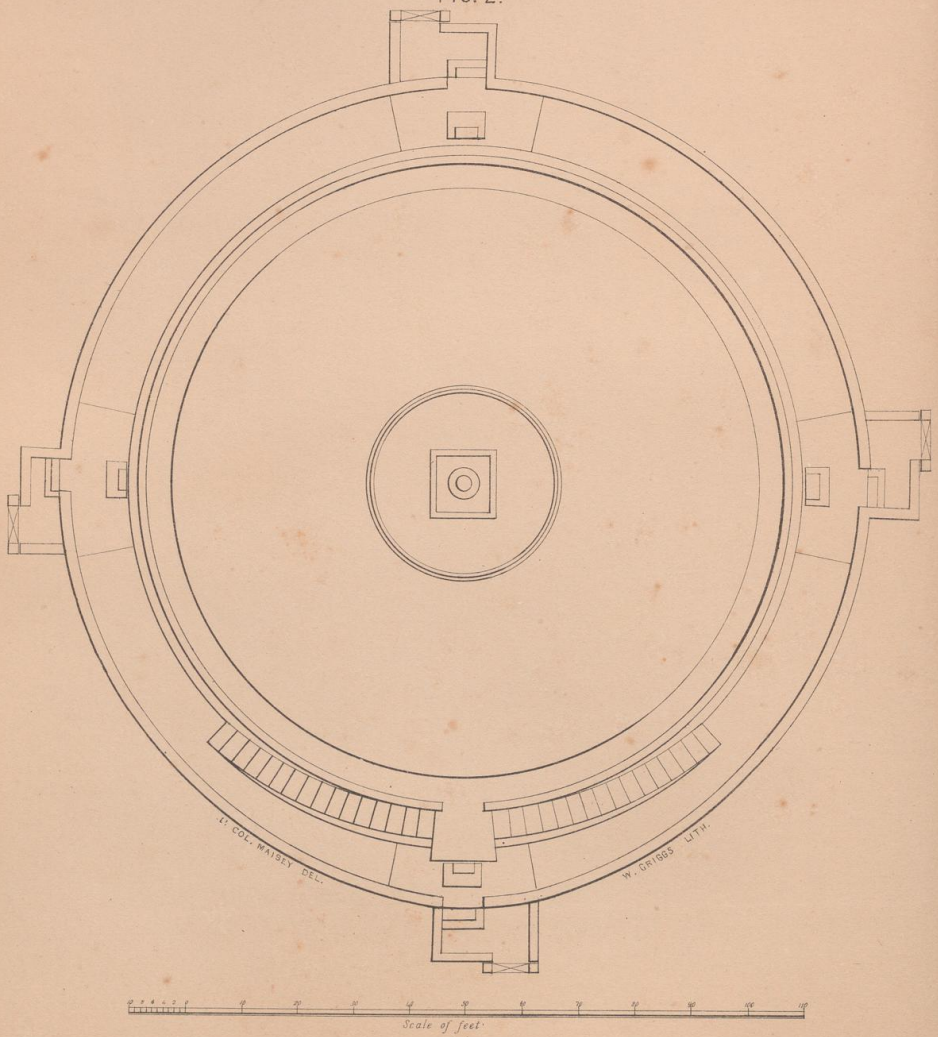


FIG. 2.



PLAN AND ELEVATION OF TOPE.

FIG. 1.

FIG. 2.

FIG. 4.

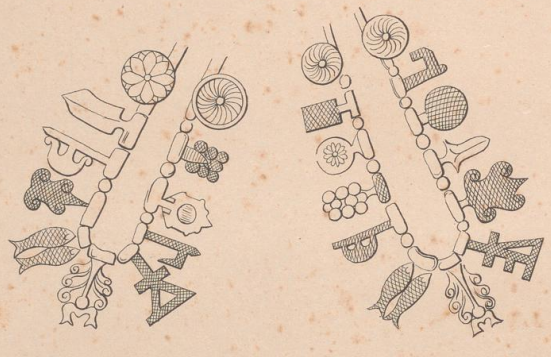


FIG. 3.

FIG. 5.

FIG. 7.

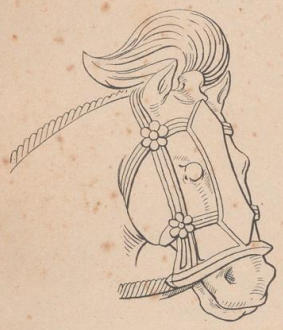


FIG. 6.

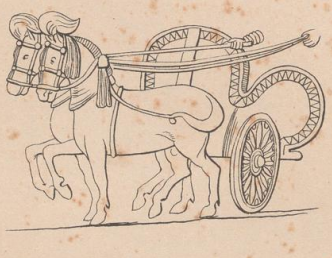


FIG. 8.

DETAILS FROM SCULPTURES.

NORTHERN VIEW OF TOPE.

NORMANN VIEW OF YORK.

EASTERN VIEW OF TOPE.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLATES.

SANCHI TOPE.

FRONTISPIECE AND PLATES I. TO V.

THE frontispiece to the work is an elevation drawn to scale of the Northern Gateway of the great Tope, as seen from the inside. A photograph of the same subject will be found on Plate VII., and a comparison between the two is not only useful but interesting at starting, as it proves, in addition to their artistic merits, how exquisitely truthful Colonel Maisey's rendering is of these complicated subjects. Although reduced in scale to bring it within the size of the page, the drawing adds considerably to our knowledge of the bas-reliefs as reflected in the photograph. The elevation is also useful as showing the relative dimensions of the Gateway as compared with those of the Rail to which it was added.

Plates I., II., and III. have already been partially described. The first shows the relative position of all the monuments in the immediate neighbourhood of the great Tope at Sanchi, and includes all those which are referred to in the following pages. The other groups of Topes at Sonári, Satdhára, Bhojpur, and Andher, are described in detail by General Cunningham, in his work on the Bhilsa Topes; but as I possess no photographs or information regarding them beyond what is found in his work, they will not again be referred to in these pages. They are principally interesting in consequence of the relics which were found in the chambers in their interior, which throw considerable light on the history of Topes in general, and the purposes for which they were erected. They are, however, all smaller than those at Sanchi, and very inferior in richness of decoration, so that they add very little to our knowledge of the architecture of the Topes, or the mode in which they were ornamented. They are, besides this, in so ruinous a condition that photography would hardly be available for their illustration, and they possess no sculptured bas-reliefs of any description.

Plate II. contains a plan and elevation of the great Tope restored by Lieutenant-Colonel Maisey, from the fragments found by him on the spot. The details of their restoration and the measurements have already been given at page 87, and need not therefore be repeated here.

Plate III. contains various details in costume, &c., some of which have been referred to already, others will be noticed in the sequel.

Plates IV. and V. are complementary to Plate II., and represent the great Tope as photographed by Lieutenant Waterhouse from two slightly varied points of view. The first shows the North Gateway, nearly in front on the right hand, and a side view of the East Gateway on the left. In the foreground, but too much out of focus to enable its details to be distinguished, stand the ruins of the Gateway of the small Tope (No. 3), shown more in detail in Plate XXI., with which it will be described further on.

Plate V. represents the Tope with the Eastern Gateway, nearly in front, and the North Gate is seen sideways on the right hand. Between the two is seen the Rail, which is nearly perfect throughout this quadrant, and enables us to judge of its relative importance as compared with the Tope itself. The berm or platform from which the dome springs, is also distinctly visible in both these photographs.

In neither view is it possible to distinguish any remains of the stucco which once covered the whole of the dome. Fragments of it are still found lying about, sufficient to show that its thickness was about four inches; but there is nothing to enable us to determine whether it was painted, or whether it was covered with ornaments in relief, as there is every reason to believe was the case at Amravati. From such representations of Topes as are found among the sculptures at Sanchi, the inference would rather seem to be that the surface was plain, but that on great festival occasions it was adorned with wreaths and garlands hung on pegs, and it may also have been adorned with tapestries or painted cloths, but so far as can now be seen, not by any permanent decorations.

The Tee and its enclosures have been thrown down, though some fragments of them are still seen lying on the surface of the mound,—quite sufficient, apparently, to justify its restoration, as shown in Plate II. Even, however, if no fragments remained, there could be no doubt but that a Tee once adorned the summit of the monument, and that it must have been very similar to the one here represented. It is probably quite correct to assert that no Dagoba ever was erected without this indispensable adjunct, and from the numerous representations we have of it, both at Sanchi and Amravati, and in other places, we can have little doubt as to its general appearance. Its dimensions are given by the diameter of the platform on the top, irrespective of other evidence.

FRONT VIEW OF NORTHERN GATEWAY.

REAR VIEW OF NORTHERN GATEWAY.

PLATES VI. AND VII.

FRONT AND BACK VIEWS OF THE NORTHERN GATEWAY.

IN describing the photographs, it will not be necessary to allude to the various sculptures on the pillars of the standing Gateways, as they have all been drawn by Colonel Maisey, and lithographs from his drawings will be described in their proper places further on. Owing, however, to the difficulties of getting up to them, none of the horizontal architraves above the Elephant capitals were drawn by him, with the exception of the central piece of the back of the lower architrave of the Northern Gateway (Plate XXXII.). We are thus left almost wholly to the photographs and Colonel Maisey's manuscript notes for our knowledge of these, which is to be regretted, as some of them appear at least as interesting as any that are drawn.*

On the right hand projection of the lower architrave, in front, "is a conical-"roofed hut, with figures and animals."† The face of the stone is so weather-worn, that it is unfortunately impossible from the photographs to add anything to this very meagre description. The hut, however, looks very like a Serpent temple.

"On the left-hand projection, huts, with numerous male and female figures, some "praying and others carrying various implements," whether Dasyus or Hindus is not stated. So far as can be made out, they seem to belong to the latter class.

"The central compartment has on its right the gateway and buildings of a "walled city, like those in other sculptures. Inside are numerous spectators and "some figures apparently doing homage to two sacred elephants or to their riders. "Near the outside of the gate stands a male personage wearing the Dhotî and large "Turban" (Hindu) "attended by several figures in respectful attitudes. The Chaori "and Chatta which accompany him mark him either as a king or a saint. There "are also a number of women with covered jars or vases."

"Next appears a four-horsed chariot of a different shape from those seen else-"where (see Plate III.). It contains a man dressed as above, and attended by "Chatta and Chaori bearers (women) and two children with tufts or plumes in their "heads. On the left another stage of the ceremony is apparently represented. The "same chariot is seen unharnessed, the yoke held up by a woman. The two children "still occupy it, but the king, or whoever he may be, is standing near the pole with "his arm stretched over the yoke, and is apparently conferring some grant or gift "to the priest or ascetic (Dasyu) before him, into whose hand he is pouring water, "an ancient mode of sealing a gift. The costume of this last figure is what is

* I presume the same difficulty which prevented Colonel Maisey from delineating them, prevented General Cunningham from making out these subjects sufficiently to enable him to describe them. No mention of them is made in his work on the Bhilsa Topes.

† As all the quotations between inverted commas in these descriptions are from Colonel Maisey's manuscript notes, this one reference will serve for all.

" usually seen in the only class that can be identified with priests, ascetics, and " saints." (Vide ante, p. 93.) "Above this group, and facing towards the city, " is another empty chariot, which a man, dressed as the preceding, is about to " harness; the four horses are seen in front."

Colonel Maisey then goes on to state that he considers this to represent a religious procession, and the dedication of the chariot to the Sun. As before stated, I am more inclined to regard it as a meeting between Aśoka or some Hindu Prince with the Dasyu Chief of the place, either on the occasion of a treaty of peace or to obtain a cession of land for the service or building of the Dagoba, or it may be his conversion to Buddhism. If the Prince is Aśoka, it is probable that the children in the chariot may be Mahendra and Sanghamittâ, and not impossible that the Dasyu Chief may be their maternal grandfather; but such speculations must wait for more intimate knowledge of the subject than we now possess.

On the back of the architrave the same subject is apparently continued, and fortunately we have a drawing of the central portion (Plate XXXII.), in describing which its subject will be more easily made out than from the present photograph.

On the left hand projection, behind the Hindu Raja, we have a walled city with figures. On the right hand projection, two Hindus, accompanied by two females and three very small children, watching two animals in a pond. Was there a Zoological Garden at Wessanagara?

The upper architraves of the Northern Gateway are more easily described and understood. The second or central one in front is wholly devoted to Tree Worship. Seven Trees of different species stand on or behind altars. They are all surmounted by Chattas and adorned with wreaths, and between each are persons in attitudes of adoration. The bas-relief in the rear of this architrave is a little more complicated. In the centre is a King or Prince seated on a high-backed throne, before whom are women and boys (?) dancing and singing. Beyond these, to the left, a Hindu Chief, with his wife and child, worship a Tree, over which float winged figures bearing offerings. To the right of the throne are "grotesque giants with pointed ears, like " the classic fawns, playing musical instruments, dancing, and drinking. Had this " sculpture occurred in a Hindu temple, it would have been called the Court of " Indra, and as Indra was one of the deities most anciently acknowledged by the " Buddhists, it may possibly be so in this instance,"—a suggestion in which I entirely concur.

The top lintel in front is devoted to mixed Dagoba and Tree Worship; there being five Dagobas and two Trees, each with all the accompaniments of honour, terrestrial and celestial, which marks the respect shown to these objects in the sculptures of Sanchi. On the rear space of this architrave, Elephants and their young are represented as bringing lotus flowers and garlands to do honour to the sacred Tree.

On the blocks that divide these bassi-relievi over the pillars, we have in front men riding on cows or oxen—a very common practice at Sanchi; boys on bridled winged lions, and winged deer; on the rear, men mounted on kneeling horses; boys on deer, and at the top winged deer again.

The other subjects and emblems will be more easily described and better understood when we come to describe the lithographs further on.

FRONT VIEW OF EASTERN GATEWAY.

REAR VIEW OF EASTERN GATEWAY.

PLATES VIII. AND IX.

Eastern Gateway.

The Eastern Gateway, for reasons hinted at above, but which will be more intelligible when the whole are described, appears to be more modern than the Northern, though it is difficult to put this difference of age into years. It has also this further peculiarity, that its sculptures are much more mythological and much less historical than those of the Gateway just described.

As lithographic representations of the sculptures of the pillars will be found in the following Plates, it will be convenient to reserve them for future description. At present, as in the case of the Northern Gateway, we shall only deal with the horizontal architraves above the Elephant capitals.

The lowest of these in front is wholly occupied by one composition, representing the worship of the Tree, with its usual accompaniments. In the centre stands a tree behind an altar, under which is the Trisul emblem,—to be described hereafter,—and above it float heavenly winged figures. "On the left is a procession of musicians, "and men carrying bunches of flowers, standards, and long poles capped with discs "and emblems. To the right of the tree are two worshippers, together with a "number of female musicians, and a kneeling caparisoned elephant, over which a "woman waves a Chaori. Upon the hind leg of the elephant stands a man shaded "by a Chatta, in the undress seen in Plate XVII., which seems to be a kind of "devotional costume.* A child holds his girdle, and a woman seems to be addressing "him. On the extreme right a personage of rank in a chariot, accompanied by "a second chariot, and a number of armed men."

So far as I can make out, this appears to me to be the same scene as that represented in Plate LIX. Fig. 2. of the Amravati sculptures. If I am correct in my conjecture regarding that bas-relief, the figure standing on the foot of the elephant would be Śâkya Muni himself, and the woman and child his wife Gopî and his son Rahula.† It is impossible, however, to speak with confidence without a more detailed representation than the photograph affords.

The rear of this architrave is occupied wholly by a number of elephants worshipping the Dagoba.

The second or middle architrave in front is occupied principally, like the one below it, with Tree Worship. "In the centre stands a sacred tree, surmounted by numerous

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* I have copied this literally from Colonel Maisey's manuscript, though, as far as I can make out from the photographs, the man standing on the elephant's foot is a Hindu, not a Dasyu, as Colonel Maisey states.

† If the principal figure is Buddha, it would reconcile the apparent discrepancy between Colonel Maisey's description and the appearance of the photograph; the garb on an ascetic might easily at that height be mistaken for that of a Dasyu.

" figures, some shaded by Chattas. On the left of the tree are the buildings and " walls of a city, which are crowded with spectators. On the right a number of " praying figures, and the footmarks of Buddha shaded by a Chatta." Both to right and left of the central tree are richly-caparisoned horses, not mounted, but led by the hand; over two of them at least are Chattas, and they seem to be objects of almost as much respect as the tree itself, or the footprints of Buddha. This worship of the horse we shall have frequent opportunities of observing in future, but more frequently at Amravati than at Sanchi.

The rear of this architrave is one of the most curious at Sanchi. It represents all the beasts of the field doing homage to the sacred tree. We have long been familiar with the animals worshipped by the Egyptians, and by other nations who have followed their example to a certain extent; but we must go to India to meet with that elevation of the brute creation which consisted in associating them with men in acts of devotion. In this instance we can recognize " lions, deer, sheep, buffaloes " or oxen, camels, rams, and large eagles." But the most remarkable among this strange congregation is the five-headed Naga himself! He is easily recognized, and there can be no doubt as to the intention of the sculptor; but it does seem strange that the god who everywhere else is worshipped should here be represented as worshipping, and not a human or celestial god, but the Tree. It is evident we are here still far removed from the supremacy which the Serpent afterwards assumed at Amravati.

The top lintel of the Gateway in front is identical in subject with that of the Northern Gateway. Five Dagobas and two Trees occupy the centre, with the projections. Both Dagobas and Trees are hung with garlands; each is surmounted by a Chatta, and adored by winged figures floating above, and human worshippers standing between them.

The rear of the lintel, like the intermediate front Rail of the Northern Gate, is occupied by seven sacred trees, each of a different species, but all similarly honored.

The only other remarkable peculiarity on this Gateway that it is worth mentioning here, is that the intermediate block behind is occupied by men mounted on two-humped Bactrian camels. We would *now* consider this a proof positive that they came from Central Asia, as this animal is not now known in India, but we do not know when the single-humped camel was first introduced into India, nor whether or not the two-humped was the usual beast of burthen in those days.

The emblem that crowns this Gateway, and other details, will, as in the case of the Northern Gateway, be more easily understood when the subsequent Plates have been described.* It will be convenient, therefore, to pass them over for the present.

* When in 1847 I published my work entitled " Picturesque Illustrations of Indian Architecture," I engraved a view of this Gateway as the frontispiece from a drawing in the possession of the Royal Asiatic Society. I never learnt by whom that drawing was made, but, from some circumstances, I fancy it must have been taken about 1830. At that time both the Trisul ornaments on the top were standing and the pedestal for the Wheel in the centre, besides many other details which have since disappeared. The Gateways have suffered more during the forty years that have elapsed since they were discovered by the English than they did during the previous eighteen centuries!

PILLARS OF NORTHERN GATEWAY.

PILLARS OF NORTHERN GATEWAY.

PILLARS OF NORTHERN GATEWAY.

PILLARS OF EASTERN GATEWAY.

PILLARS OF EASTERN GATEWAY.

PILLARS OF EASTERN GATEWAY.

PLATES X. TO XV.

THESE six photographs represent from various points of view the three external faces of the upright pillars of the Northern and Eastern Gateways, which are still standing. It will not be necessary to describe their sculptures in detail in this place, as all these bas-reliefs have been drawn by Colonel Maisey, and lithographs from his drawings will be found in the Plates of this work. As these are much more distinct than the photographs, it will be more convenient to describe them in detail when referring to the subsequent plates. The photographs are nevertheless extremely interesting, not only as authenticating the lithographs, but also as showing the position of each bas-relief with reference to the others; and it may be possible hereafter to trace some connexion between them. In Colonel Maisey's volume they are arranged consecutively as they stand on the pillars, but I fail to catch any trace of a story running through them, and have consequently arranged them in this work according to their subjects. It is most important, however, that others should have the means of knowing how they are placed on the monument itself, and for this purpose the photographs are indispensable. With a little familiarity, the subjects as lithographed are easily recognized in the photographs, and each is referred to specially in the descriptions which will be given hereafter.

The bas-reliefs exist only on two faces of the pillars. On the inner side, or that turned towards the Dagoba, the lower part is completely concealed by the pre-existing Rail, so that there is only room for one square piece of sculpture in each. In both Gateways this consists of a representation of a Dagoba on the right-hand pillar, and a sacred Tree on the left (Photographs VII. and IX.), these two being the principal objects of worship at Sanchi, and therefore selected when only two could be represented.

The outer faces of the four pillars are covered with architectural ornaments which are not represented in the lithographs, being sufficiently clear in the photographs. On the Eastern Gateway this consists in a rich ornamentation of lotus flowers, interwoven with a scroll ornament; not in such good taste as such ornaments are generally found to be in monuments of this class in India.

On the Northern Gateway the ornament on the right-hand pillar (Photograph XI.) is in much better taste, and of its class is as good and elegant as anything to be found either at Sanchi or Amravati. It does not seem to have any particular meaning, but the same detail is found on the intermediate props between the architraves in front of both Gateways.

The ornament on the left-hand pillar of the Northern Gateway (Plate X.) is the only one which seems to have any symbolical meaning. The central part consists of a floral ornament somewhat similar to that on the companion pillar, but narrower, and on each side of it are eight hooks or pegs, from which depend wreaths or garlands. From the second peg two necklaces of emblems are suspended, which are represented on a larger scale in Plate III. Fig. 4. Some of these will be easily

recognized; others will be referred to in the sequel. At the bottom of the pillar are the sacred impressions of the feet of Buddha, and at the top an ornament which, in order to avoid theory, I have ventured to style the Trisul or Trident ornament. It is one of the most common features both here and at Amravati. It crowns both these Gateways (Plates IV. to IX.). It is seen on the standards and arms of the soldiers everywhere. It is found on all or nearly all the old Buddhist coins, and generally may be said to be one of the most favourite emblems of the age. Yet it must be remarked it is never worshipped, as the Wheel emblem is, nor as the Tree or Dagoba are. As an object of worship, it is certainly inferior to these; as an ornament, it occurs more frequently and nearly as prominently.

Although so common, it is not very easy to explain what the meaning always may be which the early Buddhists attached to it. The key to the mystery may, however, probably be found in the annexed diagram from one of the notes by Rémusat on the travels of Fa Hian.*

This emblem is also found in China and Thibet, inscribed with Sanscrit letters, which serve further to designate the parts. Thus the lowest marked "a" means the earth; the circle "va" represents water; the triangle "ra" fire; the crescent "ka" stands for the wind; and the cone marked "kha" for ether. General Cunningham,† by a different process, makes out that it is compounded of the old Pali letters, meaning the same thing; though in this case it is not quite clear whether the emblem was derived from the letters, or the letters from the emblem.‡ But this is of little consequence, as by any of these processes we arrive at the same conclusion that the Trisul ornament represents the five elements or the material universe.

No. 13.

When, however, it is placed on the top of a pillar, as is done in this case, and very frequently at Amravati, and connected with the feet of Buddha on the base, it is not so clear what the combination means; but without wishing to put it forward for more than it is worth, I would suggest that the two together may stand for Buddha, or the first person of the Triad—Buddha, Dharma, Sangha—the two latter being represented by the Wheel and the Tree. It must be recollected we are now speaking of times before Buddha was represented by images to be worshipped. If the first person of the Triad was represented on the monuments at all, it must have been by some emblem. So far as can at present be perceived, there was no other which can be appropriated to him.§

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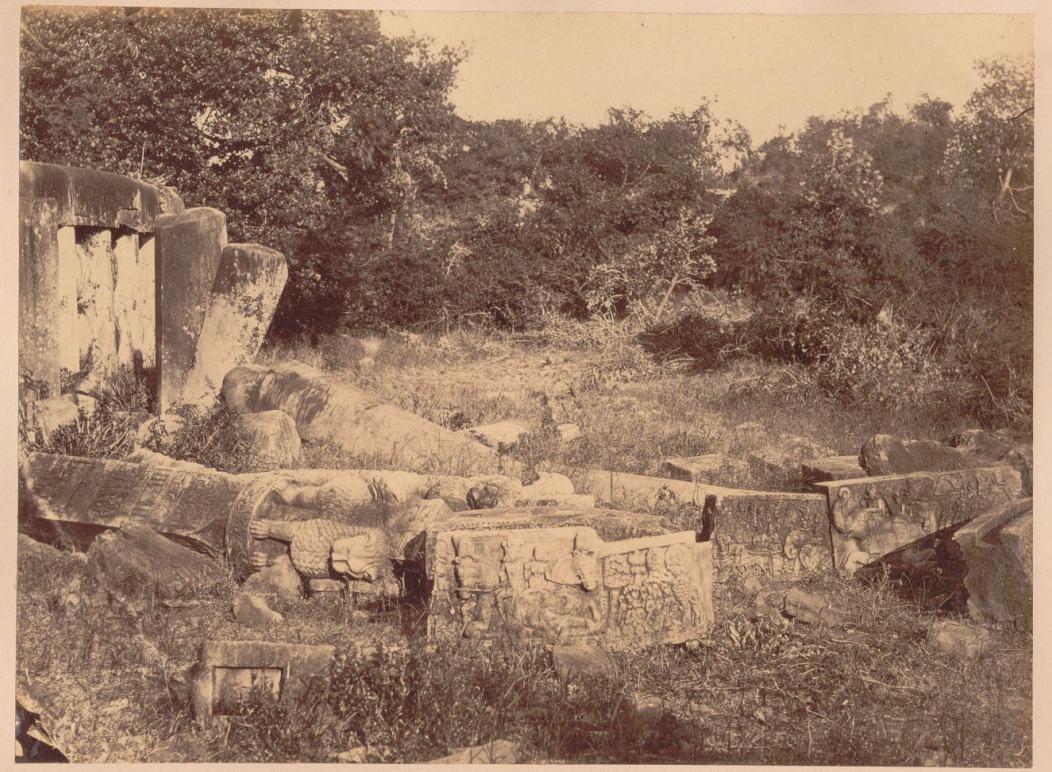
* Foě-Kouě-Ki, p. 92.

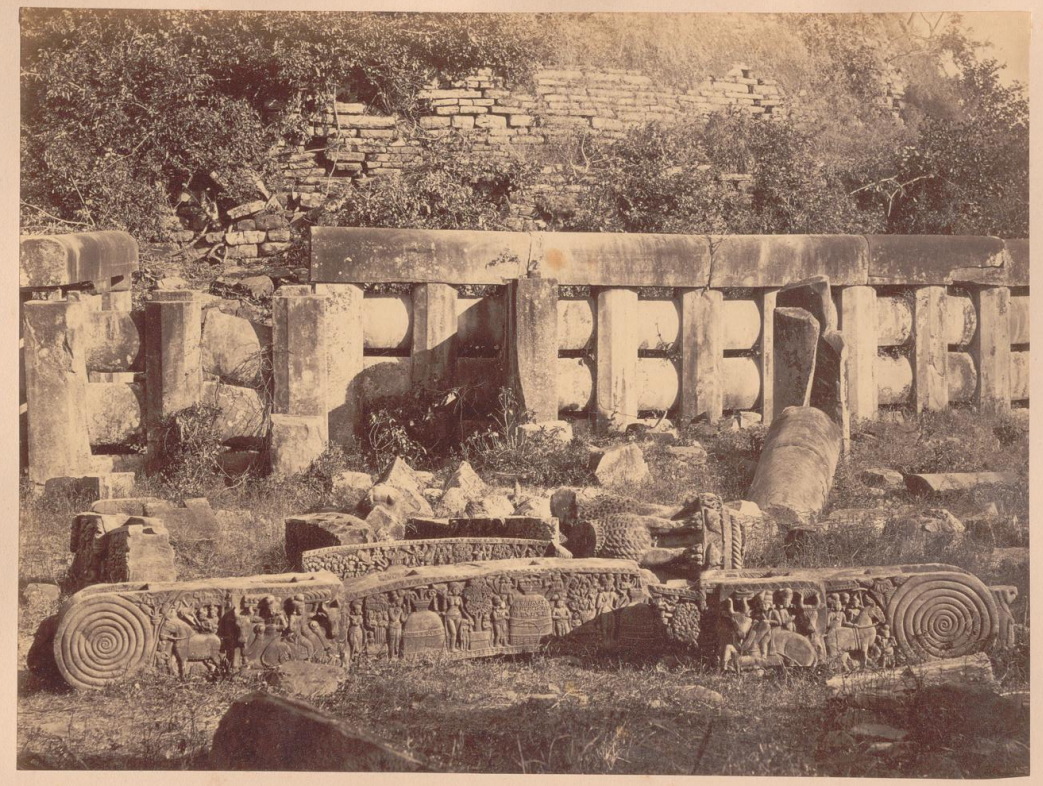
† Bhilsa Topes, 355.

‡ General Cunningham then goes on to state that he considers this emblem the representation of Dharma, the second person in the Buddhist Triad. Here I cannot follow his reasoning. If any, the Wheel represents the Law.

§ In the Foě-Kouě-Ki there is a curious story (chap. xx.) of a king—Prasenajit—"who having a strong "desire to see Buddha, who was then absent in heaven, caused a head of an ox to be sculptured in sandal wood, "in such a manner as to represent the image of Foě, and placed it where he had sat." In this form the legend is quite unintelligible; but may not this emblem have been called "the Ox-head emblem" from its similarity to that animal's head, and hence the confusion of ideas?



RUINS OF SOUTHERN GATEWAY.



RUINS OF SOUTHERN GATEWAY.

RUINS OF SOUTHERN GATEWAY.

PLATES XVI., XVII., AND XVIII.

Southern Gateway.

This Gateway is entirely prostrate, and was apparently lying on the ground as it is now when Captain Fell visited Sanchi in 1819.

Colonel Maisey is inclined to consider it as the oldest of the four Gateways. "The "pillars," he says, "are different in style from the others, and the buildings and "costumes struck me as having served as the models for those of the other gates, "which, though evidently the work of superior artists, have not so original an "appearance." It is difficult to form a positive opinion on such an argument as this without seeing the sculptures themselves, but it is probable Colonel Maisey may be right. But, on the other hand, there is so much more of Serpent Worship in the sculptures, and they show a certain character of finish that would rather seem to place them, as sometimes I felt inclined to do, as the third. Though with the materials at my command, I am unable to offer a decided opinion on the subject, I think the sequence in which they were erected is tolerably clear. The North and East Gateways, with their elephant capitals, certainly come next to one another, and of the two the Eastern is certainly the most modern, and it is therefore probable that they are either the first or the last pair. There is a reason, however, which seems to me even more cogent than that assigned by Colonel Maisey why the Southern Gateway should be oldest. On looking at the plan, Plate II., it will be perceived that it is opposite the flight of steps that leads to the terrace from which the dome springs. This must, therefore, always have been the principal entrance, and when only one Gateway existed it seems most improbable that it should be anywhere else. It is as unlikely that they should adopt such an ill-balanced arrangement as to add the Western Gateway next, but more probable that the Northern one should have been erected as a pendant to the Southern, and also because it faced one of the principal ascents to the terrace. If this is so the Eastern followed next, and the Western was the last added. Its dwarf capitals being exceptional, also favours this idea.

In an artistic point of view, the question is not very important, as all four probably were erected within the limit of 100 years; but as this is the Gateway that bears the Sâtakarṇi inscription,* and is consequently the one on which the age of the whole mainly hinges, it is important that its relative position in the series should be correctly determined, if it is possible to do so.

One of the pillars of this Gateway, with its lion capital, is seen photographed in Plate XVI. A lithograph of the principal bas-relief in front of one of the pillars—

* This inscription is seen on a Dagoba in the centre of the architrave in the foreground of Plate XVII.

the only one accessible as it lies on the ground—will be found in Plate XXX., and its lion capital is represented in Plate XXXIX. The principal historical bas-relief, representing a siege, is lithographed in Plate XXXVIII. Fig. 2. Each of these will be described in its proper place further on, and will suffice to convey a tolerable idea of the sculpture of this Gateway.

The fragments represented in the foreground of Plate XVI. seem to be among the sharpest and clearest of the whole series. Those to the right hand and further off are portions of Fig. 1. Plate XXXVIII., but we have unfortunately no drawing of the bas-relief in front of it—part apparently of the intermediate architrave. On it are seen a group of men and women among trees, the two men with five-headed snakes, and the five women with single snakes. The continuation of the bas-relief will be observed in Plate XVII. behind the principal one, where two more men and several female figures will be observed with the same Naga accompaniments. In the centre of the architrave is a Dagoba with flying figures worshipping, and beyond, the right-hand portion is filled with sacred trees.

In front of this all across the picture (Plate XVII.) is the upper architrave, divided as usual between Tree and Dagoba Worship, three Dagobas and four Trees occupying the central portion. On the projection on either end is the sacred horse, caparisoned, and with the royal Chatta borne over him. On the blocks over the pillars are men riding on oxen, bearing offerings in their uplifted hands.

In addition to these sculptures, another is described by Colonel Maisey, but unfortunately neither drawn nor photographed. "It represents the worship or perhaps "consecration of a Chatta-shaded Tope of two terraces with hovering Kinnaras. "On the Tope is an inscription.* To the left are numerous male and female figures, "standing as on the folds of snakes, whose heads canopy their heads. The costume "is Indian (Hindu). The group seems to represent some person of distinction, "attended by male and female followers, some of whom worship the Tope, while "others bring offerings, &c. On the right a procession approaches, consisting of some "person of rank, shaded by a Chatta, in a two-horsed chariot, preceded by musi-"cians and horsemen, one of whom carries the curious spouted teapot-looking utensil "which occurs so frequently in the sculptures. Three elephants, with standard bearers, "bring up the rear." This curious bas-relief, Colonel Maisey says he was deterred from drawing, in consequence of its being much corroded by exposure, and refers to a native drawing published in the J. A. S. B., vol. III., p. 481, which, however, is so incorrect that but for his testimony it would be impossible to recognize it as representing the subject he describes.

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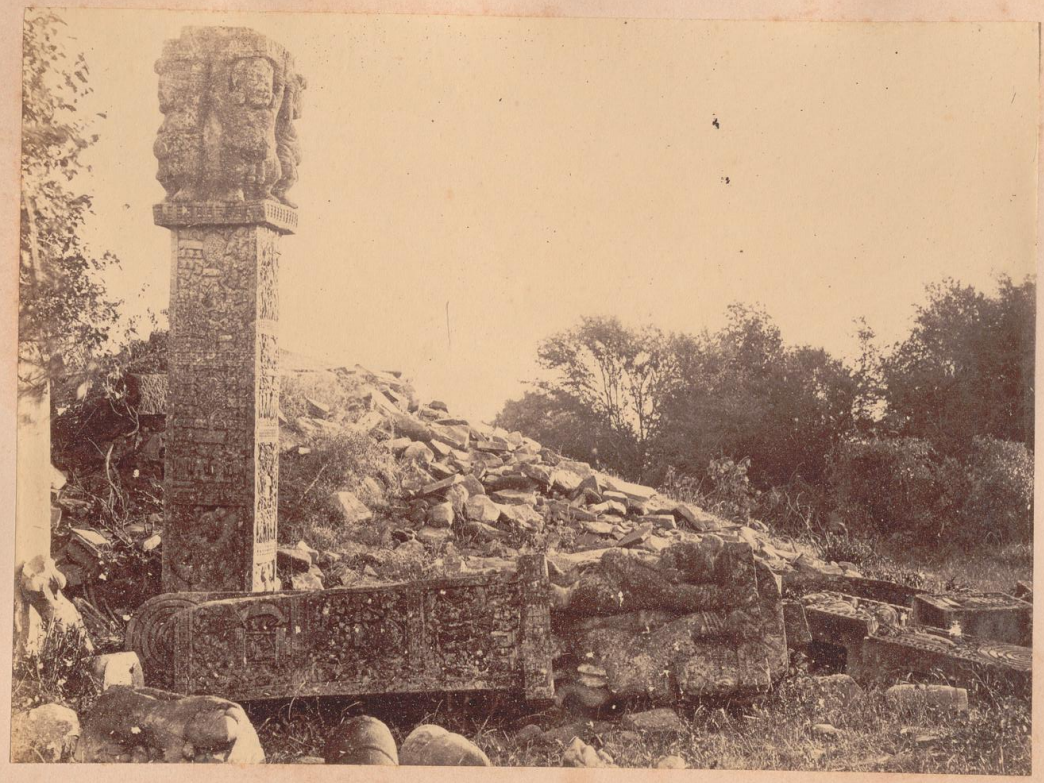
* Cunningham, Bhilsa Topes, p. 266 (Ins. 191).



RUINS OF WESTERN GATEWAY.

RUINS OF WESTERN GATEWAY.

GATEWAY SMALL TOPE.

PLATES XIX., XX., AND XXI.

Western Gateway and Gate of small Tope.

The Western Gateway fell only a few years ago, in consequence apparently of the clumsy digging into the Tope of some nameless amateurs, who overwhelmed it with the rubbish they threw down from the Tope itself. Only one of the pillars is now standing, but the other, though on the ground, is accessible, and all their sculptures have been drawn, and will be found among the lithographs in this work, and will be described further on as they occur.

The architraves are occupied apparently with the same class of subjects as those represented on the other Gateways, with only such variation as the taste or skill of the sculptor might suggest. There are also as usual two historical scenes. One of these, representing the triumphal return of the army bringing back the relics, is engraved on Plate XXXVIII. The other seems either the commencement or a continuation of the same subject. All this is in perfect accordance with the sequence just pointed out; and the triumph is thus the concluding historical scene on the Gateway last erected. If this is so, however, it assumes a preconcerted design for the whole of the sculptures, which would bring them more nearly together than I would feel inclined to do from the other indications available.

There are no inscriptions or any marks on the Gateway of No. 3 Tope, represented on Plate XXI., which could assist us in ascertaining its age; and as Colonel Maisey has not drawn any of the more important sculptures, we are left almost wholly to the photographs for what knowledge we may gather regarding it. The fact of the Tope, containing relics of the two principal disciples of Buddha—Śâriputra and Mahâ Mogalâna—is, as before mentioned, no test of its age. These may have been preserved in some chapel or shrine connected with the great Tope from the time of Aśoka till the Christian era, and been accessible to the public, as relics frequently were in early times, and this Tope may have been erected to contain them when the fashion of concealing them came into vogue. Even, however, if it was as old as the great Tope, its age is no test of the age of its Gateways. The style of their decorations is therefore the only evidence we have, and so far as can be judged from the photographs—we have only one drawing of this Gateway, Plate XLII., Fig. 3.—there is no difference between the sculptures of the Gateway and those of the great Tope. A careful examination on the spot might reveal peculiarities which we cannot see in our illustrations.

I have placed it in juxtaposition with the Western Gateway, because the one possesses the same dwarf capitals as the other does, and in so far as this feature is concerned this would indicate that it was of the same age. Lion capitals we know are as old as the time of Aśoka, and this might readily suggest their employ-

ment, as was done in the Southern Gateway, as already pointed out. Elephants are also found surmounting the capitals of pillars as early as Aśoka's time;* so that these two forms had long been familiar to the architects of the Sanchi Tope. The dwarf capital, however, is new, so far as we now know, and is so ugly that we cannot help wondering at its introduction after the other beautiful forms, but its symbolism may have been more attractive to the eye of the devotee than its want of grace is repulsive to our artistic taste, so we must not judge too hastily.

The sculpture on the front of the only lintel still "in situ" is of considerable interest for our purposes, and is thus described by Colonel Maisey:—"The front "face of the lintel is curious; the volutes are formed of snakes, and the portion "over the pillars are men slaying monsters half elephant half snake." (This does not occur elsewhere, so far as I know.) "The centre portion has several groups "apparently on the banks of a river. On the extreme right and left are snake-"canopied men seated with one arm encircling the neck of a woman. In the centre "is a pavilion, on the roof of which are six spectators, and under it a male per-"sonage seated on a throne. Like the figures right and left, he is attended by "several women, one of whom is seated, and talking to him. Kinnara (flying "figures) hover near the pavilion, marking it and the person under it as sacred. "Between the groups are rocks, among which various figures may be detected."

The photograph is unfortunately on too small a scale to enable us to add anything to this description. This is to be regretted, as the serpent volutes are a curious architectural fact, and as these spirals occur on all the Gateways it would be very interesting if we could trace back the form to a Serpent origin. It may, however, be only a caprice in the present instance. The monster, half elephant half serpent, is also new, but cannot be distinguished in the photograph.

The groups in the foreground of the photograph (Plate XXI.) seem to represent the same objects as are found in the other Gateways, but seem better done, and the whole seems so much more to resemble what is found at Amravati, that on this ground alone I would feel inclined to place it as the most modern of the Sanchi Gateways. It certainly is the most essentially Ophite of the group.

If the ruins of the Tope itself were searched, it is probable that some of the pillars of the Rail might be recovered. If this were the case, their ornamentation would prove a surer test of age than the Gateways. As it is only at Sanchi that these Gateways are found, we have no means of ascertaining their relative age by comparison.

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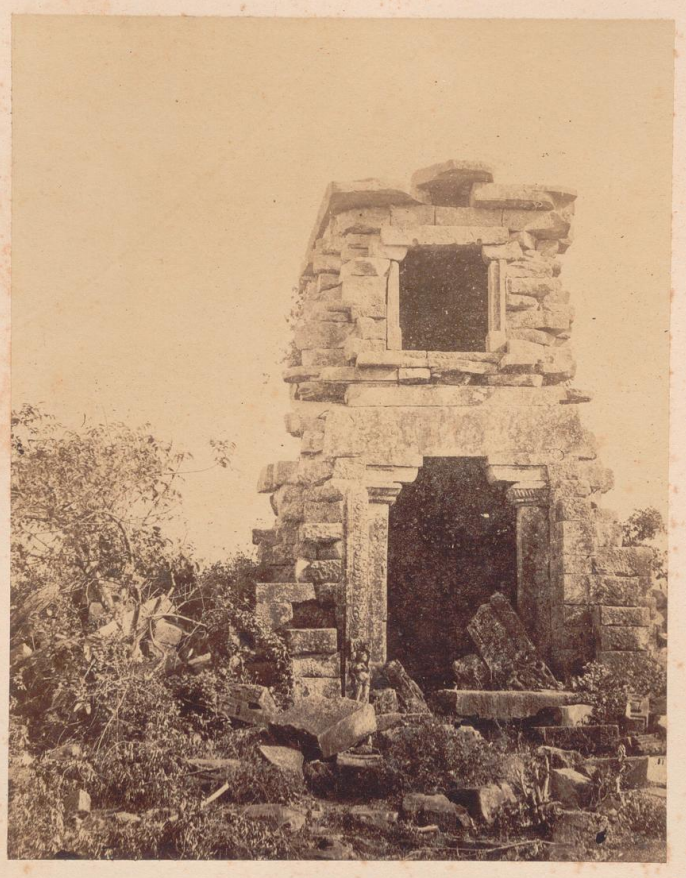
* History of Architecture, vol. II. p. 459.

CHAITYA HALL.



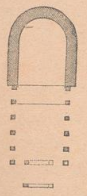
RUINS OF VIHARA.

PLATES XXII. AND XXIII.

CHAITYA AND VIHARA.

As before mentioned (p. 80), these (marked Q in Plate I.) are the only remains of a structural Chaitya hall that have yet been discovered standing in India. But, judging from its style, it must be considerably more modern than any of the buildings just described. As will be seen from the plan, it consists of a nave with six pillars on each side, and measuring internally 29 feet north and south, by 19 feet 4 inches. Beyond this is a choir 27 feet by 19 feet, surrounded by a wall 4 feet thick, though at present only about 2 feet high; but the photograph reveals to us the fact that the last pillar was evidently built into a wall to its whole height. "In the "centre," Colonel Maisey says, "of the curved end is a mass of débris "which seems to have been the remains of a Chaitya, or relic shrine, "such as is seen in the Buddhist Caves." "Round the exterior of the "circular part," he adds, "are traces of masonry at some distance."

No. 14.



PLAN OF CHAITYA HALL.
Scale, 30 ft. to 1 in.

There can be no doubt but that this is just such a hall as we meet so frequently at Karlee, Ajanta, and elsewhere. It must originally have had a wooden roof, of a form it would not be difficult to restore, and it was surrounded by an aisle, but whether entirely free, or supported by wooden pillars, is not quite clear. The fact of its internal pillars being of stone and of the slender masonic shape shown in the photograph, proves it to be much more modern than the Cave at Karlee or the oldest at Ajanta, which it is nearly certain date from about or before the Christian era. These, though in the rock, retain in every feature their original wooden constructive form. Here, where wooden pillars would have been admissible, stone takes their place. This could hardly have happened before the fourth or fifth century. It may be even more modern than that date.

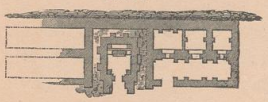
It would be extremely interesting, if it could be ascertained by excavations what the width and form of the outer aisle were in this example, as enabling us to understand what is now obscure in those cut in the rock. In all those the ornamental pillars extend on each side of the nave, as here, to nearly where the Dagoba stands—as we would express it, to the entrance of the choir. The apse is in all the older rock-cut examples surrounded by plain octagonal shafts without base or capitals, but why this should be so has hitherto always been a mystery. If, however, it was the custom, as in this instance, to enclose the choir by a solid wall in a structural Chaitya, it is evident that such a form could not be adopted in the rock, as in this case the circumambient aisle would thus have been absolutely dark. In structural examples the aisle could easily have been lighted from the exterior; indeed, it probably was an open

colonnade. The plain pillars in the rock may thus have been intended to reproduce the solid wall of the structural example. Possibly that part was ornamented with frescoes in structural Chaityas, and may have been hung with tapestries on state and festival occasions in those excavated in the rock.

Vihara.

The photograph—Plate XXIII.—represents in like manner almost the only standing remain of one of the Vihâras or Monasteries which, when Buddhism was flourishing, were to be found in every part of India. From its plan (marked L in Plate I.) and details it is, however, evidently much more modern than even the Chaitya hall last described. The central cell is a feature not found in the Caves before the sixth or seventh century, and this one has so Hindu-like an aspect that it is impossible not to suspect that it may be much more modern. There were apparently only three cells on each side, one 12 feet by 8, the other two 8 feet square. These open into a verandah, at one end of which is a figure of Buddha seated crossed-legged and similar to another which occupies the central sanctuary. Colonel Maisey's drawing of the last of these is reproduced in Plate XLI. Its style would tend to the impression that it at least belongs to the latest date of Buddhist art in India. Four statues of Buddha very similar in style and design to this stand within the Rail of the great Tope opposite to each of the four entrances. They are all, however, evidently so modern that they have no connexion whatever with the original design, and may have been added as late as the ninth or tenth centuries of our era.

No. 15.



Vihara at Sanchi.
Scale, 50 feet to 1 inch.

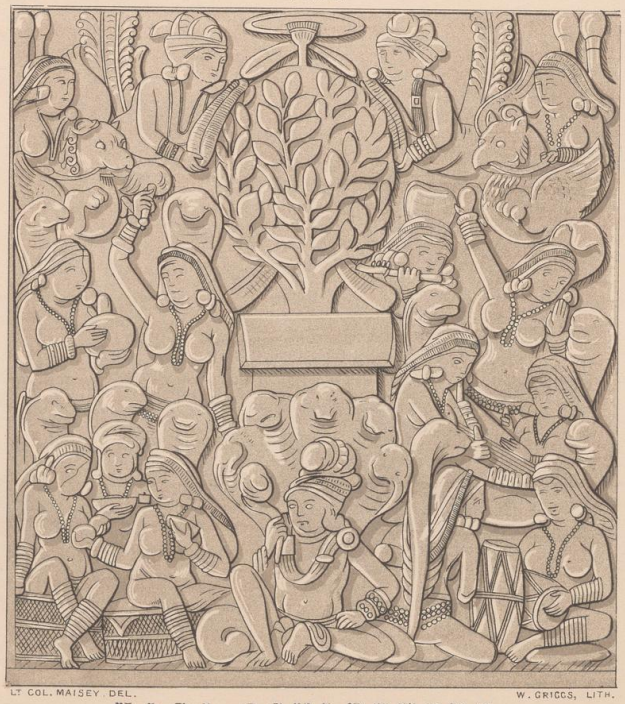
The great Vihâra (marked N in Plate I.) seems to have been situated exactly opposite to the eastern entrance of the great Tope, but it is now so completely ruined that its plan can hardly be made out, and no details of architecture are standing from which its character or age could be determined. The spot, however, is interesting, as this probably is the site of the Mahâ Chaitya, erected by Aśoka's Queen, and in which Mahindo resided (B.C. 250) before proceeding on his mission to Ceylon.*

* Vide ante, p. 90.

SANCHI.

FIG. 1.

FIG. 2.



Lt COL. MAISEY DEL. W. GRIGGS, LITH.

NAGA SCULPTURES.

PLATE XXIV.

THE subjects of the two bas-reliefs, lithographed from Colonel Maisey's drawings in Plate XXIV., may be taken as the typical form in which the Naga is generally represented both at Sanchi and Amravati. The upper one is found in the centre of the inner face of the left-hand pillar of the Eastern Gateway (Plates XIV. and XV.) The lower one is found in the corresponding position on the left-hand pillar of the Western Gateway (Plate XIX.), but whether this correspondence of position is accidental or has any meaning is by no means certain. It is worth remarking, however, as such coincidences may eventually lead to some theory of decoration being discovered.

The upper bas-relief represents those people I have ventured to call Dasyus, worshipping the five-headed Naga, who appears in a small hexagonal temple, raising his head over what appears to be an altar. In front of him stands a pot of fire, but whether this is to be considered as a fire altar or not must be left for future consideration; but what is still more remarkable is that fire is certainly issuing from the openings in the roof of the temple. I am of course aware that it has been frequently suggested that the Serpent is the emblem of the Sun, and that Fire is the natural representative of the Solar Deity; but all this is indistinct everywhere, and it does not appear to have any local reality in India. On the other hand, we know that two of the principal Vedic gods—Indra (the firmament) and Agni (fire)—were adopted into their pantheon by the early Buddhists, and it seems more reasonable to connect this appearance of fire with the pre-existing worship of Agni than with any far-fetched allusion to solar worship. We shall have occasion to return to this subject presently, as fire occurs in another bas-relief at Sanchi, but never at Amravati, nor, so far as I know, in any more modern Buddhist monument.

In the foreground of the bas-relief we have an old man seated in a circular leaf-thatched hut. A scarf is bound round his knees and loins, a very usual attitude in India at all times. His upper garment is hung up behind him in the hut, and in front is a bearded man of his own tribe, apparently addressing him. Near the last is another pot of fire, with three pairs of tongs or ladles, and what appears to be a bundle of sticks to keep up the flame. Close beside him are an elephant, two buffaloes, sheep, and deer; but whether it is intended that they too should be worshipping, or merely represent property, must be left uncertain for the present. On the left of the picture two boys and a girl seem to be amusing themselves at play, but, which is remarkable, they are as decently clad as their elders, and in strange contrast with the superior race in the lower picture of the Plate. The whole scene is represented as passing in a forest. Above are trees and rocks, with monkeys and peacocks; below, a reedy marsh opening into a lake with lotus flowers, and occupied by geese.

The lower bas-relief represents a very different scene. In the centre of the upper part is the sacred tree, behind its altar, with its Chatta and garlands, occupying

the same position the serpent did in the other. Two Garuḍas or Devas,* or flying figures, present garlands, and two female figures, riding on griffons of strongly marked Assyrian aspect, approach it on either side.

In the centre of the lower part of the picture sits the Raja or chief male personage on the Naga, whose five-headed hood shelters him. On his right sit three ladies on stools, eating and drinking, and each with her tutelary snake behind her. Above those a female Chaori bearer and a woman with a bottle—let us hope of water; but they, too, have snakes behind them. On the other side are two women playing on drums,† two on harps, one on a flute, and a fifth dancing, but all likewise with snakes, and all in the costume which I have ventured to designate as that of the Hindus.

The worship of the Naga by the bearded Dasyus, as represented in the upper bas-relief, does not occur again at Sanchi, and it occurs only once at Amravati. There, however, the five-headed snake very frequently occurs in front of the Dagoba, and in a position where it is intended it shall be worshipped not only by Dasyus, but by all the world.

The Hindu male or Chief canopied by the Naga, as shown in the lower, occurs at least ten times ‡ at Sanchi, and must have occurred several hundred times at Amravati.

What are we to infer from this? Is it that the Naga is the god of the aboriginal Dasyus, whom the intruding Hindus adopted so far as to represent him shielding and honouring them? The Hindus, it must be recollected, were the builders of the Topes and the carvers of the sculptures, and there is no instance at Sanchi of a Hindu doing honour to the snake. The snake there always honours them. Or is it that the race I have called Hindus were the real Naga people, and they taught the Dasyus to do honour to their god? These questions will recur continually to every one reading the following pages, and it is premature to attempt to decide them now; but I may state that my impression is, that Snake Worship was an old and prevalent form of aboriginal faith all over India before the Aryan immigration, and that the Aryans adopted it in proportion as they became mixed with the aborigines and their blood became less and less pure. It is not mentioned in the Vedas, hardly hinted at in the Râmâyaṇa, occupies a considerable space in the Mahâbhârata, appears timidly at Sanchi in the first century of our era, and is triumphant at Amravati in the fourth, and might have become the dominant faith of India had it not been elbowed from its place of power by Vishnuism and Sivaism, which took its place when it fell together with the religion of Buddha, to which it had allied itself so closely.

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* Both General Cunningham and Colonel Maisey call these figures Kinnaras. If I am rightly informed, however, that term is properly applied only to a flying figure with a horse's head. Garuḍa is probably the correct name to apply to them. Care, however, must be taken not to confound these Buddhist figures with the Garuḍa of the Mahâbhârata, the celebrated son of Vinatâ, and the dreaded enemy of all the Naga race. Perhaps Devas would be the most correct denomination. These are the first of the Buddhist hierarchy, and at least in one instance are represented as acting as here shown. "When Bosat was about to arrive at that place —the Bo-tree at Buddh Gya—all the Dévas of the world of forms first hung on the Tree silken banners and streamers."—See J. R. A. S., XX., p. 157.

† If anyone will observe the way the snake attaches itself to the back of the left-hand drummer girl, they will understand how the *two* snakes grew out of the shoulders of Zohak. Some such representation of him must have existed in the time of Firdusi: hence the fable.

‡ I speak of those only I have been able to detect in the photographs; neither General Cunningham nor Colonel Maisey were sufficiently aware of their importance to count them.

FIG. 1.

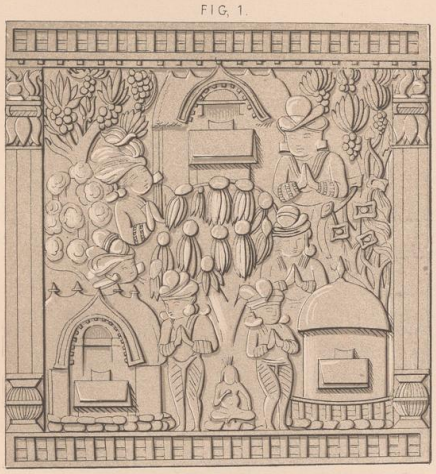


FIG. 2.

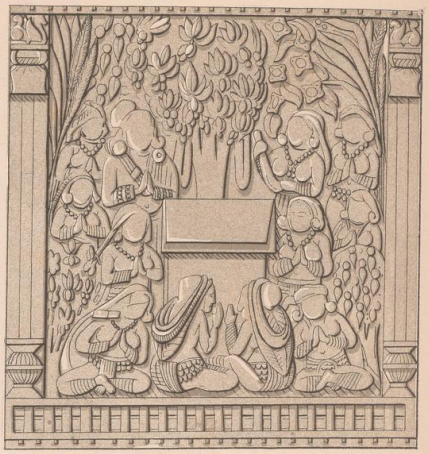
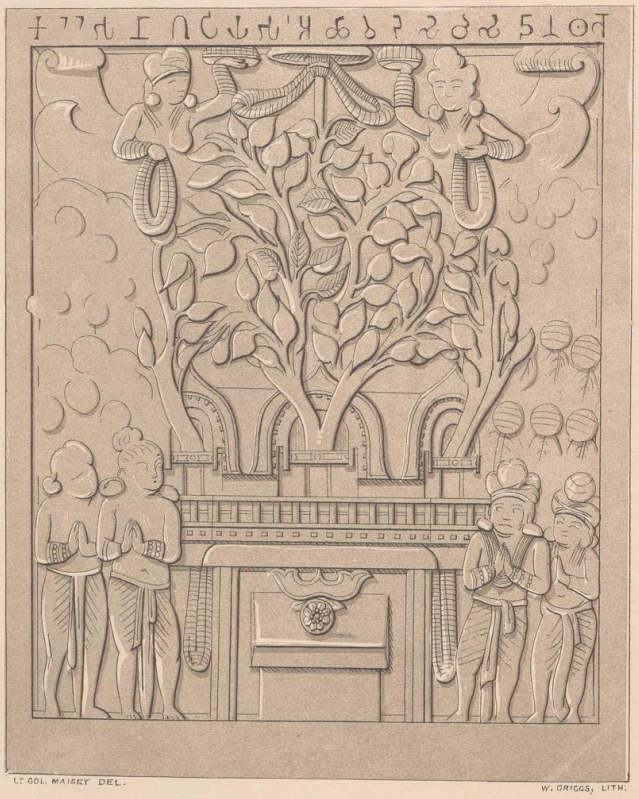


FIG. 3.



LT. COL. MAISEY DEL. W. GRIGGS, LITH.

TREE WORSHIP.

PLATE XXV.

WHATEVER doubt may exist as to the extent to which the Hindus intend at Sanchi to honour the Serpent, or to represent the Serpent as honouring them, there is none whatever as to the reverence they everywhere are represented as paying to Trees. These alternate with the Dagobas on the architraves as the two principal objects of worship, but taking also the representations on the pillars into account, the Tree is certainly the chief divinity of the place.

That represented as the principal subject (Fig. 3.) of this Plate, may be considered as a typical example. It occurs in front of the left-hand pillar of the Eastern Gateway (Plates XIV. and XV.), next to the Fire Temple, with the Naga of the last Plate, and their juxtaposition may have some meaning, all the figures in the Naga bas-relief being Dasyus, all those in the Tree picture being Hindus. The tree itself is the Pipal (*Ficus religiosa*), the true Bo-tree of the present Buddha. A temple has been built around it, and it is represented as growing out of its windows. In front is an altar, on which is the Trisul emblem, and it is difficult to understand what its presence here can mean, unless it is "Buddha," or "Sacred to Buddha." Above the tree is the ennobling Chatta, and on either hand Garuḍas or Devas bearing offerings. Below, on each hand, two male worshippers in the costume of the Hindus.*

Fig. 1. of this Plate is one of several subjects to which it is difficult to attach any distinct meaning or story. In the centre is a tree of a different species from any we have yet met with; and two men in Hindu costume, one on either hand, seem to be offering worship to it. In addition to this, however, there are two small shrines or temples, each with what appears to be an altar in front. That in the centre above has no worshippers. The one on the left below is encircled apparently with a wall of rude stones; that on the right by the usual Rail. Men in Hindu costume seem to be offering prayers to both these temples—are they tombs?—and between them a child is seated cross-legged, in the attitude we usually associate with Buddha. This bas-relief is in front of the left-hand pillar of the Northern Gateway (Plate XXXI.), a little higher than Fig. 2., which is the lowest of three bas-reliefs which ornament the inner face of this pillar.

The tree in Fig. 2. is of a different species from that represented in Fig. 3., though it occurs in both the upper corners of Fig. 1. There, it does not appear as a sacred tree at all. In this bas-relief it stands behind an altar, and has garlands pendent from its branches, but no ennobling Chatta surmounts it. Notwithstanding this, one male and eleven female figures are certainly worshipping it, and one woman presenting an offering.

It would be interesting if the species of this tree could be determined, as

* The inscription, according to Cunningham, p. 263, reads, "The pillar gift of Nâgapriya Achavada, the Śreshṭhi or Chief of the weavers."

according to Buddhist tradition each of the twenty-four successive Buddhas of the present "Kappo" had a different Bo-tree.* Their names, in Pali, are all recorded, and could no doubt be identified with known trees, and many of them with those represented in these sculptures. This is evidently a flowering tree (Champa?), and occurs more frequently than any other, except the "Religiosa," which we know to be the Bo-tree of the present Buddha.†

The women in the bas-relief all wear the enormous chignon which ladies in these days seem to have considered a sufficient substitute for all other dress. In this instance, however, their costume is not quite so open to this objection as is usually the case either here or at Amravati.

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* Turner's Mahawanso, p. XXXII.

† I have been unfortunate in not being able to procure from any competent Indian botanist the assistance requisite to enable me to determine the species of the various trees represented in these bas-reliefs. There is difficulty attending it, no doubt, as the representations are to a considerable extent conventionalized; but still artists who could draw animals so well, that in no instance can a mistake be made as to which is intended, could also draw trees so as to enable them to be identified. The subject, however, is neither pressing nor very important, and can be done hereafter. There are, I think, only six or seven species altogether, and there can be very little doubt as to one or two of these. Ward, in his Hindu Mythology (3d edition, vol. I. 263), enumerates the following trees as considered sacred and worshipped by the followers of Vishṇu:—the Pipal and the Banyan, *Ficus religiosa* and *Indica;* the Vukoolu, *Mimusops elengi;* the Huritukee, *Terminalia citrina;* the Amalakee, *Phillanthus emblica;* and the Nimbu, *Melia azodaracta.* Except the Banyan, all these will, I believe, be found in our bassi-relievi.

SANCHI.

FIG. 1.

FIG. 2.

LT COL. MAISEY DEL. W. GRIGGS, LITH.

TREE WORSHIP.

PLATE XXVI.

THE two bas-reliefs represented in Plate XXVI. occur the one over the other on the inner face of the right-hand pillar of the Northern Gateway; Fig. 2. is, however, on the pillar above instead of below Fig. 1. (Plates X. and XII.) Both are representations of Tree Worship, but the lower one is remarkable because the two principal devotees are monkeys. Two men in Indian costume stand behind them, with their hands in the attitude of prayer, and beside them two females with offerings in their hands. In front of the altar, behind which the Tree stands, are two other Hindu females, with a child between them, kneeling in deep devotion. Of the two monkeys one is making an offering to the Tree, the other is in ecstasies.

In describing the back of the Eastern Gate, we have already seen all the beasts of the field (not monkeys) hastening to do honour to the Sacred Tree, but here we have monkeys mixed with men, or rather preferred to them; as the men stand back, while the monkeys present their offerings, they are really the principal worshippers. All this may have arisen partly from the tenderness for animal life and kindness to all created beings that Buddhism always inculcated; partly from the doctrine of metempsychosis, which was always an essential part of the faith; but something may in this instance be due to local tradition. It was in the forest of Daṇḍaka, certainly not far from Sanchi, that Râma met with Hanumân, the godlike monkey, who played so important a part in the subsequent records of the Râmâyaṇa. If monkeys could fight in Hindu tradition side by side with men, why in Buddhist forms should they not pray with them?

The Sacred Tree, in this instance, appears to be the *Ficus religiosa*, but two other trees are represented, which occur frequently in the bas-reliefs. The one with the large fruit appears intended for a species of Jack (*Artocarpus integrifolius*), the other a flowering tree, which has not yet been identified.

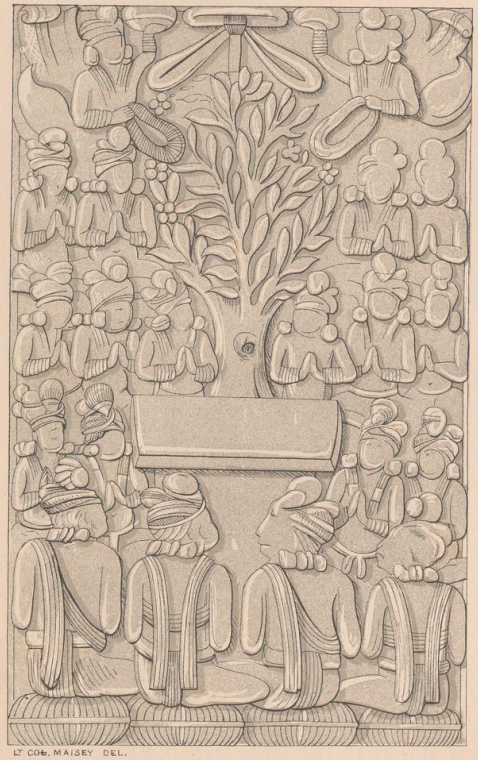
The upper bas-relief (Fig. 1.) represents a Hindu Raja, known to be so by his Chatta, with four female and two male attendants, doing honour to the Tree, to which two of the females, more fully clad than usual, are presenting wreaths. Above, two Garuḍas, bearing offerings, are seen full length. This is one of the few instances in these bas-reliefs in which these figures are seen complete, so that all their features may be distinguished. Their feet, wings, and tails are those of birds; their heads and bodies are those of human beings, but always, as far as can be made out, males, which may be an objection to the name of Harpy, which would seem a name that might be appropriate. These in classical representations were always apparently females, and of an odious nature. Here they are always represented as heavenly messengers, and bringing offerings. As Garuḍas are always represented as the fifth in rank among the eight heavenly beings* in the Buddhist pantheon, that name is probably the one the Buddhists would themselves employ.

* In the Lalita-Vistara (Foucaux), p. 250, et passim, they are enumerated as les Dieux ou Devas, les Nâgas, les Yakchas, les Gañdharbas, les Assouras, les Garuḍas, les Kinnaras, et les Mahôragas.

Above the tree on the right is another figure very common in these sculptures, but seldom seen so completely as in this instance,—a winged lion figure, on which a man rides, bearing an offering. There are abundance of winged lions on the Assyrian sculptures, but they are never represented as flying. At Sanchi they are always in the air, and always carrying human figures bringing offerings to the Tree or shrine. The representations at Sanchi are, of course, very much more modern than those in Assyria, but it is not clear that the Indian form may not be of an original stock as old or older than the Assyrian.

SANCHI.

FIG. 1.



LT COL. MAISEY DEL.

FIG. 2.

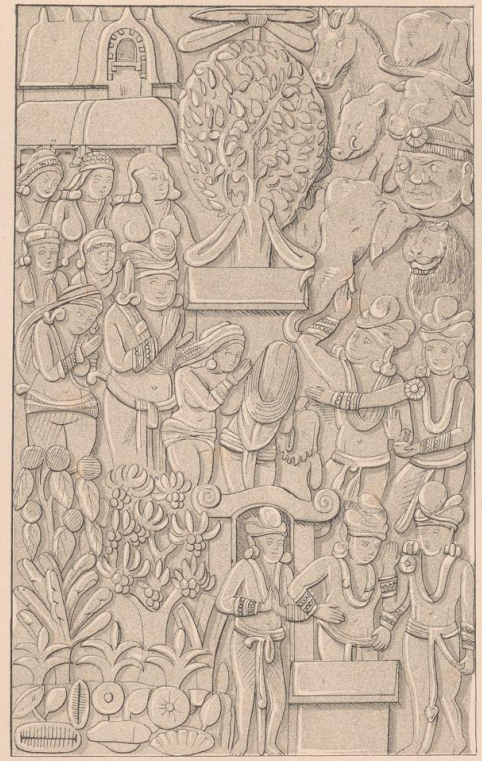


FIG. 3.

W. GRIGGS, LITH. INDIA MUSEUM.

TREE WORSHIP.

PLATE XXVII.

On Plate XXVII. are engraved three forms of Tree Worship, which have been reduced to a smaller scale than usual, as they do not present any great features of novelty, but are interesting as indicating some of its forms. Fig. 1. represents eighteen men in Hindu costume, some sitting, some standing, doing homage to a Pipal tree surmounted by a Chatta and attended by Garuḍas. It is from the inner face of the right-hand pillar of the Western Gateway (Plate XIX.).

Fig. 2. is immediately above it on the same Gateway, and presents a somewhat more varied form of the worship. Below are three men, one standing in a gateway, in front of an altar, but this group does not seem to have any connexion with that above. In the middle of the picture are three men, three women, and a child, who also seem bent on doing honour to the tree. Above these, on the left hand, are five women, apparently of inferior rank, and on the right hand a lion, an elephant, a boar, an ox, a horse, and a sheep. Among them is a round, very jolly human face, with large ears, and evidently intended to represent a giant or ogre, or some of those semi-human beings so common in Eastern story. The interesting part of the bas-relief is that these animals evidently rank with the females opposite, and join with the men in doing honour to the Holy Tree.

The third bas-relief on this Plate is one which it is extremely difficult to make out, not that there is anything new in the form or in the objects worshipped, but that owing to the imperfect knowledge of perspective possessed by the artist, it is extremely puzzling to suggest what the stone work between the two trees is intended to represent. It looks at first sight like a stair with a rail on either hand, but it does not lead to any terrace or building, and the object for which it was designed, or why the two similar trees should be planted at each end, is by no means clear.

In other respects the sculpture presents no novelty—men, women, and children, with drums and musical instruments, are assembled to do honour to the Trees. The upper one seems to be a Pipal, evidently the same as that in Fig. 2. The lower bears some fruit or flower, but so does that in Fig. 1., which from the form of its leaves is intended to be a Pipal (*Ficus religiosa*). In the centre picture a Plantain tree is plainly distinguishable, and above that the tree I have ventured to suggest may be a Jack, with the flowering tree that occurs in several of the previous bas-reliefs.

This sculpture is from the outward face of the right-hand pillar of the Northern Gateway at the top (Plate XII.).

Taken together, these three figures fairly represent the most popular form of worship at Sanchi. It will be observed that no Dasyus appear in them. Indeed there is no instance at Sanchi in which those people are associated with the Hindus in worshipping either Trees or anything else. Their worship of the Serpent or Fire or any other object is solitary and apart. It is difficult to understand why this

should be so, as the Hindus seem never to hesitate to associate the beasts of the field with them in their worship, and if so why not their fellow men? This is the more remarkable as in other bas-reliefs these Dasyus are treated as equals, and many of the sculptures are wholly devoted to them and their pursuits, and this by the Hindus, who, we must presume, were the people who erected the monument and carved its sculptures.

The preceding—with one other example on the next Plate XXVIII. Fig. 2.—exhaust the illustrations of Tree Worship, in so far as they have been drawn by Colonel Maisey from bas-reliefs exclusively devoted to the subject on the pillars of the Sanchi Gateways. These Plates are far, however, from conveying an adequate idea of the extreme frequency of such illustrations, though they may represent nearly all the forms in which it is found. Taken altogether, the Tree is, generally speaking, the most usual and the most important object of worship represented in the sculptures at Sanchi Tope. Next after this comes the Dagoba, but neither so important nor so frequent. It may be suggested that this is owing to the great Tope being there itself to be worshipped, and that its mimic representation was therefore not needed. A careful study, however, of the sculptures renders this explanation hardly tenable. It can scarcely be doubted but the sculptures are intended to represent the creed, and the whole creed, of the people who erected the Gateways, and the relative importance of each part of the faith. It is probable, therefore, that the frequency or prominence of any object sculptured in these Gateways may fairly be assumed as representing its relative importance.

FIG. 1.

FIG. 2.

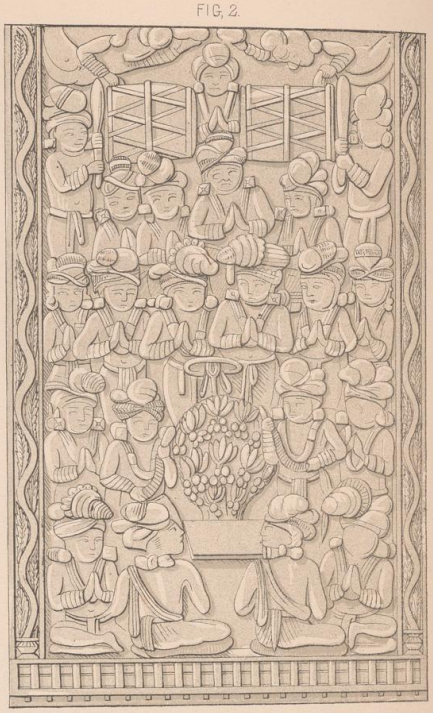
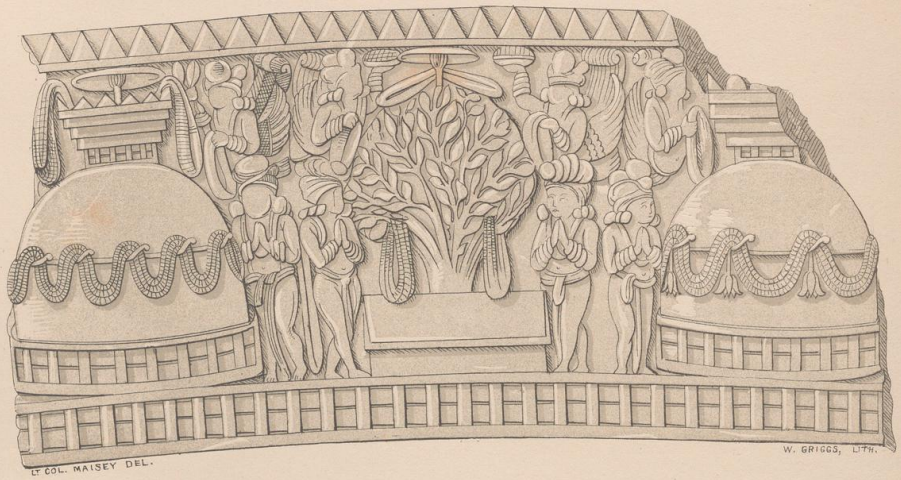


FIG. 3.



LT COL. MAISEY DEL. W. GRIGGS, LITH.

TREE AND DAGOBA WORSHIP.

PLATE XXVIII.

Of the three subjects in this Plate, the one (No. 2.) in the upper corner on the right hand is wholly devoted to Tree Worship. The central portion of the lowest bas-relief (Fig. 3.) is devoted to the same form of faith, but in conjunction with the worship of the Dagoba. The upper one on the left hand is wholly devoted to the last form. The two first named conclude, for the present, our illustrations of Tree Worship at Sanchi, and the pictures in this Plate serve to introduce the form next in importance.

In Fig. 2. twenty-one men, with two Garuḍas or Devas, are assembled to do honour to the Tree, which in this instance is the flowering tree with reversed leaves, frequently alluded to above. The head-dresses of the men are more than usually exaggerated in this bas-relief, and so are the drums which two men are beating with clubs.

In the lower bas-relief (Fig. 3.) two men and two Garuḍas are doing honour to the Tree, in this instance the *Ficus religiosa*, and here treated as equal to the Dagoba, and alternating with it throughout.*

With the one exception of that represented in Fig. 1. of this Plate, the typical form of all the Dagobas in the sculptures at Sanchi is that shown in the lower figure (No. 3.). The dome is represented as a little higher than a hemisphere, and adorned by a wreath of flowers hung on pegs prepared for the purpose. The lower part is surrounded by a Rail, apparently detached, as in the case of the great Tope, and the summit is always surmounted by a Tee of the usual form. Above this is an umbrella, sometimes with flags, and almost always with two or more wreaths dependent from its angles. Garuḍas almost invariably hover around it, and offer garlands or baskets containing some objects it is impossible to distinguish.

When we come to describe the representations of Topes at Amravati, it will be seen what immense progress had been made in decorating these objects during the three centuries that followed the erection of the Sanchi Gateways. If, however, we compare the Sanchi Dagobas with those found in the Caves of Karlee, or the earliest at Ajanta, it will be seen that they are nearly identical. As it has always been assumed, though on perfectly independent grounds, that these Cave Dagobas dated from about the Christian era, this is another confirmation of the date above assumed for the Sanchi portals.

The exceptional Dagoba represented in Fig. 1. of the Plate is the upper bas-relief on the inside of the right-hand pillar of the Northern Gateway (Plate X.). It is very much taller than any of the others, and is surrounded by three Rails. The upper one of these, possibly the two upper, are attached. It may be merely ornamental

* The upper (Fig. 2.) is from the right-hand pillar of the Northern Gateway at top (Plate XI.). The lower (Fig. 3.) is from one of the beams or architraves of the same gate.

like those in the Topes in Afghanistan. The lower is certainly detached, and two figures are standing within it with offerings in their hands. This lower enclosure is entered by a gateway, apparently of wood, but evidently the prototype of the Sanchi portals. The Tee is surmounted by three umbrellas, with their dependent garlands, and on each side are two Garuḍas bringing offerings.

The most interesting point with reference to this bas-relief is, that the people who are represented in the foreground are neither the Dasyus nor the Hindus, who appear in all the other sculptures, but an entirely different race, and who are seen at Sanchi only in this bas-relief. They are all shaven, generally have their heads bare, and the hair bound by a small fillet. Their hair also is peculiar, being short and curly, like a negro's, or as that of Buddha is represented to be in more modern times. Their costume is a tunic with sleeves, fitting tightly to the neck, and reaching below the knees,* being unlike the kilt and cloak of the Dasyus or the dhoti of the Hindu, and their boots or sandals (Fig. 5. Plate III.) are also quite different from any seen elsewhere. Their musical instruments are also new to us. The double pipe replaces the fife. The drum is differently formed, and the trumpets are of a kind seen nowhere else in the sculptures. Their banner alone, with its "stars and stripes," or rather stars and Union Jack combined, is like what we shall afterwards meet, but this may be local and peculiar to Sanchi.

Who are the people here represented? Their costume would indicate the inhabitants of a northern, or at least a colder climate. Their woolly hair points to a southern, unless it may be that some people with close curly hair did at this time inhabit Afghanistan or some of the countries near it. It has ever been one of the puzzles of Buddhism that the founder of the religion should always have been represented in sculpture with woolly hair like that of a negro. That the Prince Siddhârtha had flowing locks is certain, but how and when the change took place is the difficulty. If we could tell who the people here represented are, it would solve the problem. They probably were the first that made statues of Buddha, and they endowed him with their crisp locks. The impression left on my mind is, that they are inhabitants of the Cabul valley, not only from their costume and the tallness of their Tope, but because of their general resemblance to some sculpture found at Tak i Bahaï, north of Peshawar. They have no women with them, which is unfortunate, as their costume might afford some useful indications, but the circumstance of their absence shows that they were strangers. Some further light will be thrown on the subject before we are done; at present it had perhaps better be left undetermined.

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* Arrian (XVI.), quoting apparently from Nearchus, describes the Hindus as wearing tunics (κίθωνες) of cotton reaching to the knees. The kiton cannot, according to the usual interpretation of the word, be applied either to the kilt of the Dasyus or the dhoti of the Hindus, but might be applied properly to this garment. The context, however, makes it more likely that a kilt was meant, because he adds, "They also wear veils, which cover their heads and a greater part of their shoulders." If they wore the sleeved tunic represented in this sculpture, such a garment would be superfluous.

FIG. 1.

FIG. 2.

LT COL. MAISEY DEL. W. GRIGGS, LITH.

FIRE TEMPLE, AND WHEEL WORSHIP.

PLATE XXIX.

The wheel represented in the lower picture of this Plate is among the most common emblems both at Sanchi and Amravati. It crowned the centre of all the four Gateways, though only a fragment of it occurs now on the Northern one (Plate VI.). My impression is that all the pillars surmounted by lions in front of the Caves, as at Karlee, supported originally a wheel in metal,* and probably some of the Stambhas or pillars in front of the Gateways, both here and at Amravati, were crowned by this emblem. After the Tree and the Dagoba, it ranks third among the objects to be worshipped. In the Lalita-Vistara it is described as one of the seven precious things indispensable to a Chakravarti Raja. "The King," it goes on to say, "whose fore-"head has received the royal consecration, having thrown his mantle over one "shoulder, and placed his right knee on the ground, with his right hand pushes "the divine wheel, saying, 'Turn, venerable and divine treasure of the wheel, with "'the Law, but not without the Law.'"† The expression that at Benares Buddha begun to turn the wheel of the Law, and afterwards that he did so at various other places, is one of the most common phrases in Buddhist scripture; and both from these expressions and the relative positions it occupies in the scriptures, it hardly appears doubtful but that the wheel represents Dharma, the second member of the Buddhist Triad. Of this, however, we shall be better able to form an opinion when the Amravati sculptures have been described. In the meanwhile, to avoid all theory, it will be convenient simply to describe it as the Chakra or the Wheel, leaving its meaning to be determined hereafter.

In this instance, as generally at Sanchi, it has thirty-two spokes. It was surmounted by a Chatta with garlands, and ministered to by Garuḍas. It stands on an altar, on each side of which is a deer in act of adoration, but whether the rest of the herd on the right hand are to be considered as worshippers or not, is more difficult to determine. Their presence here seems to be an allusion to one of the eight signs which distinguish the incarnation of Buddha. Of these the seventh is "Turning the wheel of the Law in the park of deer."‡ This deer park is especially famous in Buddhist legends. It was visited and carefully described by Hiouen Thsang.§ Among other things he mentions, "In the centre of the chapel (Chaitya) is a statue of "Buddha in copper, of the exact dimensions of Tathâgata, whom it represents "turning the wheel of the Law." The place is now known as Sarnath, north of Benares, and a celebrated Dagoba now standing there is the best known Buddhist monument in India. In Buddhist times it was always known as the Mṛigadâva or Deer park, and renowned as the place where Sâkya Muni first and principally taught. The presence of the deer here, and the flowering trees and shrubs, seem

* Foĕ-Kouĕ-Ki, XX. 171.
† Lalita-Vistara, translated by Foucaux, III. 15.
‡ J. R. A. S., XX. p. 140.
§ Voyage, I. p. 132.

almost certainly intended to indicate this spot, and the wheel is either meant to represent the one that Buddha turned, or is at least symbolical of his preaching.

The eight men who are represented as worshipping seem all of equal rank, and as many more were probably ranged on the other side. They are all dressed as Hindus, and all have their hands joined in the attitude of prayer.

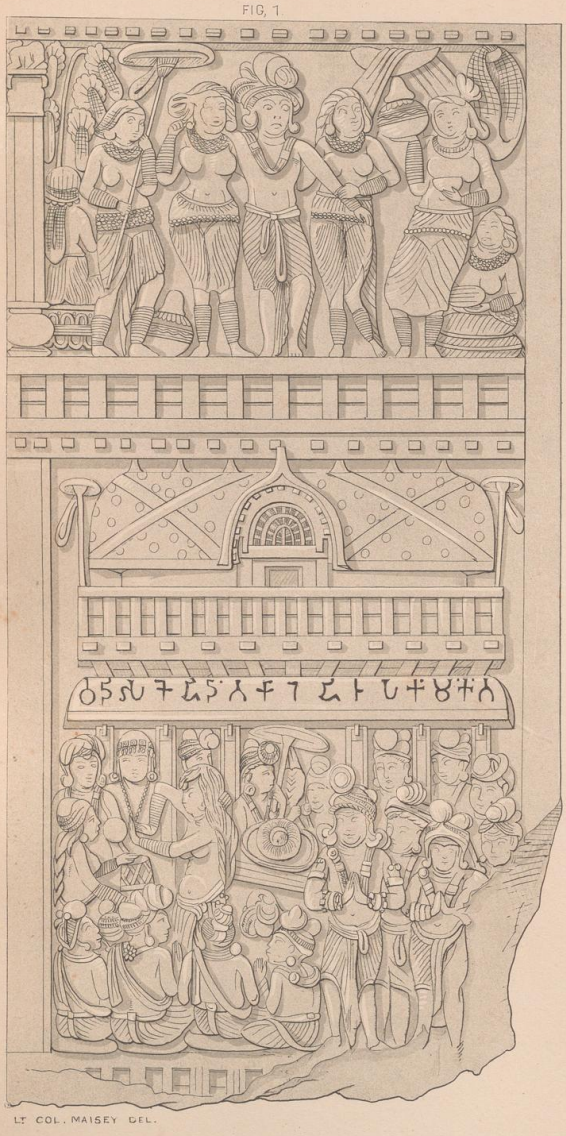
The upper figure in this Plate is one of several at Sanchi, of which it is very difficult to suggest a plausible interpretation. In the foreground ten Hindus in two rows appear to be worshipping the façade of a rock-cut Chaitya Cave. This may be intelligible enough, but on the right hand two human-headed rams, and on the left are seen two monsters apparently joined together, half lion half dog, and above these flame issuing from the rock, occupies the whole of the upper part of the picture.

The monsters in the upper part of this picture are, so far as I know, unique, but no doubt possess some mystic meaning which some one familiar with the Tantras may be able to explain. The most curious part, however, is the fire and flames which seem issuing from the rock. Hitherto we have only met with fire in conjunction with the Dasyus and with Serpent Worship, as in Plate XXIV., but the people here represented are all Hindus, and no trace of the Serpent is visible. Besides the flame looks more like a natural phenomenon than an artificial fire, but certainly is not an accident, but from the conduct of the people in the foreground a thing to be worshipped.

I must leave it to some one else to suggest a meaning for this representation, as I have not myself met with anything that would tend to solve the mystery.

This bas-relief occurs on the top of the inner face of the left-hand pillar of the Northern Gateway, Plate XI.

FIG. 1.



LT COL. MAISEY DEL.

FIG. 2.

W. GRIGGS, LITH. INDIA MUSEUM

PILLAR SOUTHERN GATEWAY.

PLATE XXX.

This Plate represents in two parts one face of one of the fallen pillars of the Southern Gateway (Plate XIV.). The right-hand figure is the upper half, that on the left the lower part of the same pillars. As already stated, Colonel Maisey considers this as the oldest of the four Gateways. "It appears," he says, "to have been the "only gateway for a long period; its pillars are different in style from the others, "and the buildings and costumes represented in the sculptures struck me as having "served as models for those of the other gates, which, though evidently the work "of superior artists, have not so original an appearance." This conjecture is further confirmed by the architectural details, and for the reasons given above (page 89) I am inclined to agree entirely with this determination The abacus is round, and surmounted by a Lion capital (Plate XXXIX. Fig. 2.). Immediately in front of it lies a lât, probably as old as the time of Aśoka (Plate XXXIX. Fig. 1.), with the peculiarities which occur in Tirhoot* and elsewhere of the age of the same king. Taking into consideration the certain pre-existence of this lion-capped pillar, it is extremely probable that when first attempting in stone a gateway of the sort, they should copy a stone form with which they were familiar. It may also be added that the mode by which the circle of the abacus is extended to the square of the pillar is weak and wooden, and would hardly be attempted after the square capitals of the other Gateways had been invented, but is just such a form as inexperience might suggest.

The sculptures in the upper part represent first the sacred Tree, with two umbrellas and garlands above, and on each side are objects which appear to be intended as representations of flags. The tree itself is the Pipal or *Ficus religiosa*. Below this is a building with pillars alternately plain and octagonal, and with pot bases very similar to those found in the Cave at Karlee.† On the altar in this building stands the "Trisul" emblem three times repeated. If I am correct in my belief that it represents Buddha in the Buddhist religion, it here is simply the emblem of the triune divinity of the Buddhist faith.‡

The lower part of the pillar is occupied by two bas-reliefs of a more domestic character. In the upper one of these a Hindu Raja is attended by six females, two of whom support him with their arms. Let us hope he is not tipsy! but the next female carries a vessel which may contain wine, or some intoxicating drink, and she has a cup in her hand. The seated figure on the right holds apparently a cake. On the left one female bears the Chatta of State, the other is seated with her back turned to the spectators. The expression of the king's face is certainly that of a man in liquor.

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* History of Architecture, II. 459.

† Ibid., 487.

‡ General Cunningham suggests (Bhilsa Topes, p. 359,) that this afterwards became the emblem of Juggernath, with his brother and sister. In this suggestion I entirely agree, but the transformation took place at a period long subsequent to that we are now engaged upon. The more I look at it the more do I become convinced that Vishṇuism is only very corrupt Buddhism.

The lowest bas-relief is more complicated and difficult of explanation. In the centre, on a tray, rests something which is certainly the principal object in the scene, but what is by no means clear. It may be a relic. Whatever it is, we know by the Chatta held over it, and the Chaori-bearer behind, that it is what is here honoured. In front a man's head lies on the ground, severed from its body. On the right are six Hindus, in attitudes of adoration, and on the left a female singer, by no means remarkable for her personal charms, is singing to the accompaniment of a drum. Four or five men in front seem to be charmed with her performance. Behind her, between the pillars, is a figure with a singularly calm and pleasing expression of countenance, and with a head-dress we have not before met with. Owing to the position in which this figure is placed, it is difficult to determine whether it represents a male or a female, and where all are shaven there is no sign on the face. From the necklace of pearls round the neck, it probably was intended for the Queen.

On one of the architraves of this Gateway (Plate XXXVIII.) we have a siege of a town, apparently to rescue a relic that had been carried off. Does this scene represent the rejoicing consequent on its recovery, and its safe deposit at Sanchi? And is that head in the foreground the head of the robber? The inscription is, unfortunately, only a fragment and unintelligible;* but even if made out, would only tell us probably who presented the sculpture to the Tope.†

The architecture of the palace or pavilion in which the lower scene takes place is so well made out on the bas-relief, that it would not be difficult to restore it. It is of course wholly of wood, but of a very ornamental character.

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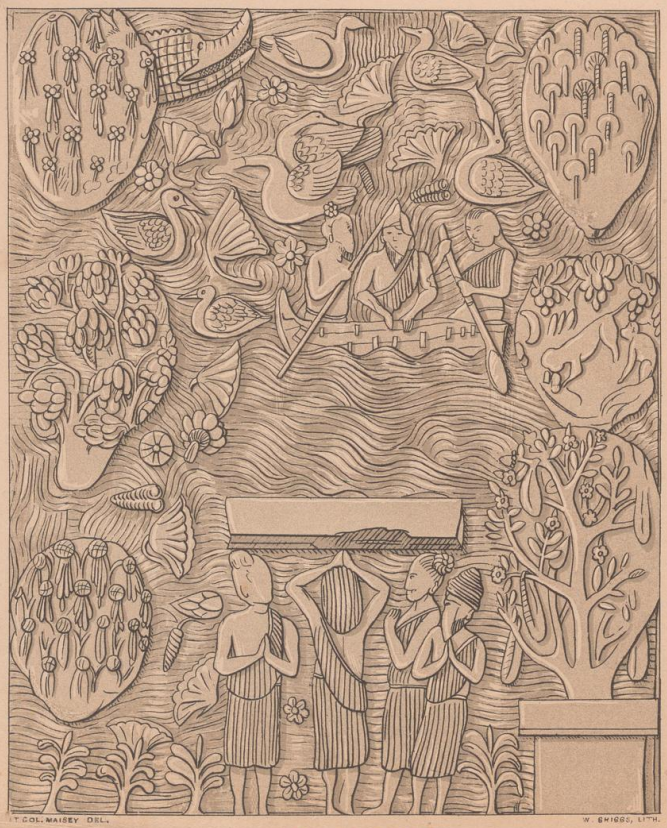
* Cunningham, Bhilsa Topes, p. 264.

† Is it possible that the explanation of this bas-relief is to be found in the following extract from the Vishṇu Purana (Wilson's translation, page 471): "Devabhúti the last Sunga prince being addicted to immoral "practices, his minister, the Kánwa, named Vasudeva, will murder him and usurp his kingdom." This event happened about the year 78 B.C., and is therefore not an unlikely one to be recorded in the Sanchi Gateways.

As this Devabhúti was the king who at least commenced the great Cave at Karlee, the finest and among the earliest of Chaitya Caves in India (J. B B. R. A. S., V. 153), we should be sorry to learn that he was addicted to drinking!

FIG. 1.

FIG. 2.



LT. COL. MAISEY DEL. W. EMIGGS, LITH.

BOAT SCENES.

PLATE XXXI.

THE objects represented in the upper part of the pillar figured in the last Plate close for the present our series of ritualistic illustrations drawn from the Sanchi Tope. With the lower part of that pillar we enter upon a series of historical and legendary subjects, much more difficult of explanation. Whatever meaning we may attach to a Dagoba, a Tree, a Wheel, or other emblem, it is easy to see that it was an object of worship, and it is a matter of comparative indifference who the worshippers may have been. With the historical scenes the case is different. We long to know who the actors are, when they lived, and the significance of the action the sculptor is bent on portraying. In the present state of our knowledge we can do little more than guess at this, but eventually it is probable more definite information may be obtained. Meanwhile, however, some of them are particularly interesting in an ethnographic point of view, or as illustrating the manners and customs of the age in which they were portrayed.

These remarks apply especially to the two boat scenes depicted in Plate XXXI. We have not an idea to what particular events either of them refer; but it would be difficult to bring into stronger contrast the two races whose acts are the subjects of the Sanchi sculptures. In the upper one we have the refined and elegant pleasure-boat of the Hindus; in the lower the rude canoe of the Dasyus. In the upper a festal water procession; in the other the matter-of-fact arrival or departure of some old chief.

Boats not unlike the upper one in design may still be seen opposite the Ghâts at Benares on festal occasions, or on the lakes at Oudypore,* or wherever a Hindu palace has a lake attached to it; but in so far as I have seen, not with a winged lion's head like this. On the present occasion the boat bears a relic casket, over which the royal umbrella is raised, and beside which the Chaori bearer stands. The scene is in a fresh-water lake, in which the lotus and other such plants abound, and around the boat are numerous figures with garlands in their hands, swimming and disporting themselves, supported on mussucks or inflated skins. It is not easy to make out whether those in the water are males or females; from their bangles and armlets, most probably the latter. There can be no doubt that the whole represents the triumphal procession of the relics across a lake or river, probably on some annual festival, but what lake or river we do not know, or what the relics may have been. If it were a periodical festival, this is of little consequence. If it represents some one great occasion, it would be delightful to know, but for this we must at least wait.

The lower picture, in strange contrast to the above, represents the rude canoe of the Dasyus, made up of rough planks, rudely sewn together by hemp or string.

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* Tod's Rajasthan, vol. I. 373.

In the centre sits an old bearded Dasyu. Two other men are in the boat with him, one paddling, the other either steering or poling.

In the foreground are four of his tribe, with their hands joined in the attitude of respect or adoration. They are either welcoming the arrival of a venerated sage, or bidding him God speed on his departure,—which, or on what occasion, there seems nothing to indicate at present.*

This scene, too, takes place in a river or fresh-water lake, as may be gathered from the plants that grow in it, and the geese that swim about. One of these seems to run a great risk of choking itself with a fish it is trying to swallow, and another of being devoured by a crocodile, who is opening his jaws to seize him.

On the right, at the lower corner, is a sacred tree hung with garlands, and standing on or behind an altar; but the Dasyus do not seem to be paying any respect to it. Above it is a tree of another species, in which some monkeys are disporting themselves. Above this and on the other side are four other trees, all of different species, and conventionally portrayed, but with so much individual character that they might be easily identified. It is hardly necessary to attempt this here, as they do not seem to have any significance beyond representing a forest on the shores of the lake, though this seems an indispensable accompaniment to all scenes in which the Dasyus appear.

The upper scene belongs to the Southern Gateway, and is seen near the bottom of the fallen pillar (Plate XIX.). The lower is on the front of the Eastern Gateway, on the left-hand pillar in the centre (Plate XV.).

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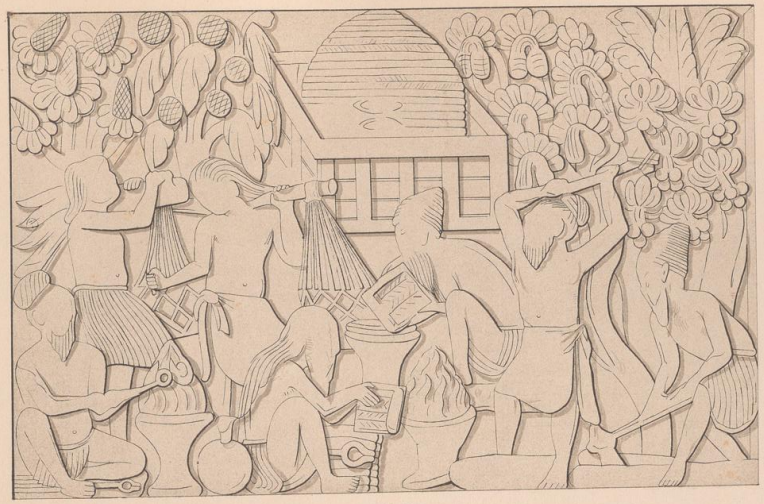
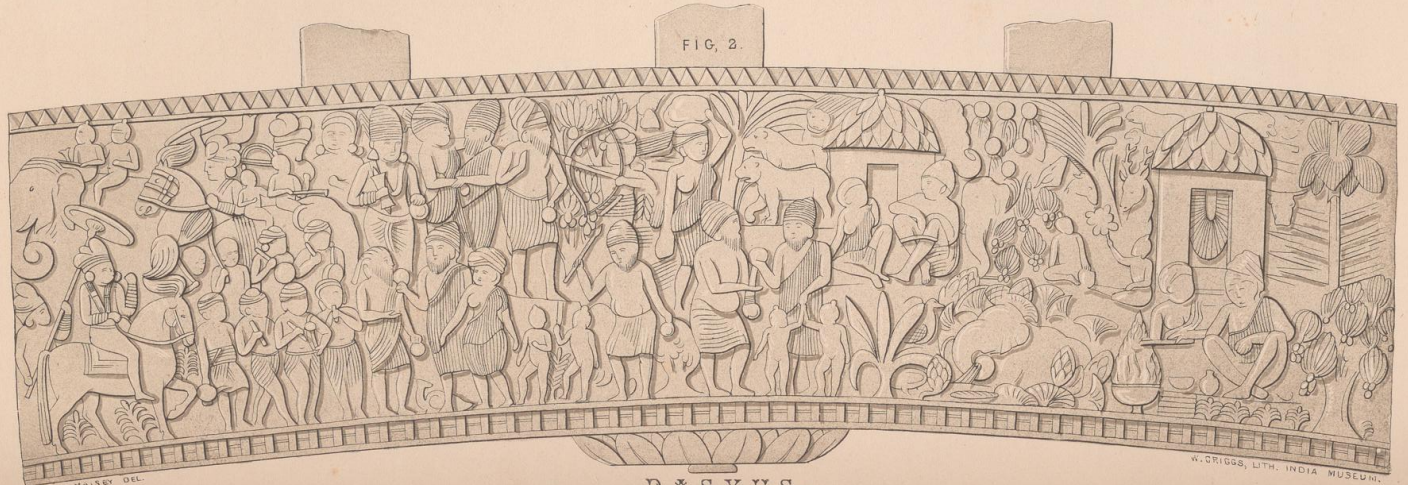
* Both General Cunningham and Colonel Maisey are inclined to give a much more elevated interpretation to the bas-relief than that I have ventured to suggest. The former considers it as representing Sâkyas Nirvâṇa (Bhilsa Topes, p. 204.), and Colonel Maisey thinks the whole is of Mithraic origin. I am sorry to differ from such authorities, but the scene seems to me as prosaic and realistic as any in the whole series.

SANCHI.



FIG, 1.

FIG, 2.



LT COL MAISEY DEL. W. GRIGGS, LITH. INDIA MUSEUM.

DASYUS.

PLATE XXXII.

The lower figure in this Plate has already been alluded to in speaking of the bas-reliefs on the back of the Northern Gateway (Plate VII.). It is here shown more in detail, and is the most complete picture of Dasyu life and manners which the Sanchi Tope affords, and is so interesting as to make us regret extremely that we have only a verbal description of the sculptures on the front of the same beam, eked out by a somewhat indistinct photograph. The subjects on the two sides of this architrave are evidently parts of the same action, and are among the most important historical bas-reliefs at Sanchi.

There appears to be nothing in this picture which it seems possible to interpret as having a religious significance. The man on the right, with the pot of fire before him, seems cooking his dinner, and his wife assisting him. There are the usual tongs and the pile of bits of wood or metal, to which it is difficult to attach a meaning if they are not firewood. There is no anvil and no hammer to lead us to suppose he was working metal, which at first sight seems probable.

In the background is a girl bearing a bundle on her head; a boy is practising shooting with a bow; a man and woman are making love; children are feeding tame deer, and playing. In the foreground two Dasyus are pouring water on the hands of two others of the same tribe. In front of the same architrave, it will be recollected, the principal ceremony is the king pouring water on the hand of a Dasyu chief,—as before mentioned, in confirmation of a grant or oath. Every one at all familiar with Hindu mythology will recollect when Vishṇu, in his fifth Avatar, descended upon earth to check the power of the great Bali, he asked for as much earth as he could compass in three steps; and when this was granted, he required that the king should confirm his grant by pouring water on his hand. This done, he stepped over earth, sea, and skies, and so deprived him of the sovereignty of the universe. In all Hindu sculptures the pouring of water on the dwarf's hand is the incident principally insisted upon.

On the left of the bas-relief the Hindu Raja, or rather two Rajas, are approaching, preceded, as we shall frequently have occasion to point out in the sequel, by drums and fifes and a boy bearing a spouted vessel like a teapot. The two children, also, who figure on the front of the architrave, reappear here.

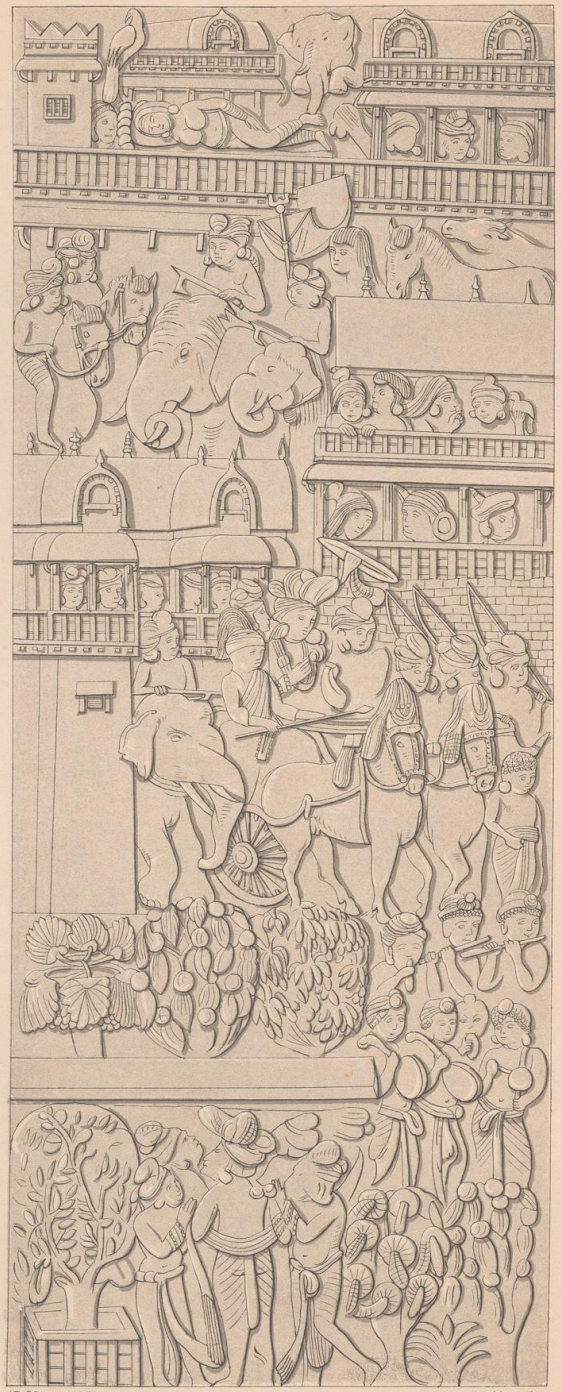
From the lions and other wild animals who appear in the background, it is evident the scene is laid in the forest; but no object of worship appears anywhere, and no indication of a religious character. For the present we can do little more than describe it as a visit from the Hindu Raja to the Dasyu chief.

The upper bas-relief is from the inner face of the left-hand pillar of the Eastern Gateway (Plate XIV.). It is immediately below that representing the same people worshipping the five-headed Naga (Plate XXIV.), and may therefore have some connexion with it, though it is not easy to say to what extent this may be the case. In itself it represents a family of Dasyus following their usual avocations,

On the right two men are splitting wood with hatchets; and what is most remarkable is, that the heads of their axes are tied on to the shafts as if they were of stone. Yet in the same bas-relief we have the tongs or ladles, which certainly are of metal; and we can hardly understand a people who could make metal pincers using stone hatchets. On the left is a youth carrying a bundle of sticks, and in front of him another with two baskets slung as a bangy, as is so usual at the present day.

The principal interest of the picture rests, however, with the three old men in the foreground. The one in the centre is pouring something into his fire-pot. The one below him is blowing his fire with a fan, and he on the extreme left is apparently cooking something in the flame, but what it may be, it is almost impossible to guess. There are, of course, the usual tongs and slips of wood (?), and all the usual accompaniments as are found on all Dasyu bas-reliefs. One thing is further worth remarking in this, which is, that two at least of the men have their long hair tied up in a knot on the top of their heads, and not the conical head-dress or mode of dressing the hair usual in other Dasyu scenes.

In the centre of the background of this bas-relief is what at first sight seems a Dagoba in a square enclosure. It can hardly, however, be meant for this, as it has no Tee, and a Dagoba without a Tee is more absurd than a Christian steeple without a belfry, or a Mahomedan minaret without a gallery. Its mode of construction, too, is most peculiar. It looks as if it were made of ropes wound round an internal framework, and the two eye-like openings are just such as would result from pulling the ropes apart to make a window. It may possibly be a forest chapel, but if so it is strange that it should be introduced in the centre of the picture, and the people in the foreground paying no attention to it. Wherever a sacred object is introduced in the other sculptures, all present are turned towards it, and all are reverencing the sacred emblem, whatever it may be. Besides all this, the square enclosure is not, so far as is now known, a Dagoba form. Looking at all the circumstances of the case, my own impression is that it represents the tomb of some Dasyu chief, and is introduced merely to indicate the spot where the scene in the foreground is being enacted. It seems nearly certain that the rails that surround the Dagobas are refined copies of the rude stone circles which enclosed the graves of the common people, but we have as yet found no form out of which the Dagoba itself could have arisen. It is not copied from an earthen tumulus, as in that case it would have been a straight-lined cone; still less did it arise from a dome of construction, as all are, and always were, solid. Nowhere, indeed, has anything been found to suggest a type. But if this is a tomb of the aborigines, the mystery is solved. We have the prototypes both of the Rails and of the Dagoba itself; and both are in the form we now find them—exactly what we know Buddhism to have been—a refinement—a sublimation, if the expression may be used, of the faith and practice of a pre-existing Turanian civilization.



Lt. COL. MAISEY DEL. W. GRIGGS, LITH.

BUDDHIST BAS RELIEF.

PLATE XXXIII.

The bas-relief represented on this Plate is one of the most extensive as well as one of the most important of the Sanchi series. It occupies nearly the whole of the inner face of the right-hand pillar of the Eastern Gateway (Plate XIII.). There is only the warder below, and a small subject of Tree Worship above. It is more than usually interesting, also, from its being the only subject at Sanchi which can be ascribed with absolute certainty to Buddhism, as we now know it. There are others which may doubtfully be assumed to portray events in the life of Śâkya Muni, but this one certainly is meant as a short biography of the Prince.

The relief is divided into four parts. In the upper we have Mâyâ, the wife of Śuddhodana asleep on the terrace of the palace, dreaming that a white elephant appeared to her, and entered her womb. This dream being interpreted by the Brahmins learned in the Rig-Veda, was considered as announcing the incarnation of him who was to be in future the deliverer of mankind from pain and sorrow.* It is, in fact, the form which the Annunciation took in Buddhist legends. It does not, so far as our illustrations go, appear again at Sanchi, but it occurs frequently, as we shall presently see, at Amravati, and is repeated in almost every Buddhist book which alludes to the birth of the great ascetic.

In the lowest compartments of the bas-relief we have the accomplishment of this prophecy. The Prince Siddhârtha, at the age of twenty-nine, at the foot of the Bodhi-druma, or tree of knowledge, at Buddh Gya, in presence of his five disciples, lays aside his robes of state, and prepares to assume the garb of an ascetic, and commence that mission which he accomplished only after fifty-one years of self negation and of missionary labour.†

Of the two intermediate scenes, the upper occurs within the city of Kapilavastu, his father's capital, and does not appear to have any special meaning. Two men on horseback meet two others on elephants, and behind the latter are two loose horses attended apparently by a groom. In the centre is the standard, with the usual Trisul emblem. All this seems to represent a night scene in the city, with the guards going their rounds.

In the central compartment, the Prince Siddhârtha in his chariot issues from the city gate attended by bowmen and elephants. In front of the chariot walks a boy with a curly head, but with no apparent occupation. Before him march seven other

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* Lalita-Vistara, p. 61, et seq.

† If this is a correct description of the bas-relief, the legend in the first century of the Christian era differed from that related in the XVIIth and XIXth chapters of the Lalita-Vistara in the eighth or ninth century. According to that authority, Śâkya Muni, after leaving his home, prepared himself for his mission by six years of the austerest penance—so severe that his five disciples could not support it, and left him. When nearly at death's door he recovers, eats what the village maidens bring him, bathes in the river Nairanjanâ, and then attains Buddhahood while seated under the Bodhi-druma, or tree of knowledge at Buddh Gya.

boys, two playing on fifes* and two on drums; two blow into a musical instrument formed of a shell, which is found frequently repeated in these bas-reliefs, though never at Amravati, and one has a smaller class of drum or tambourine.

The city walls and the windows of the houses are crowded with men and women looking at the procession, and all in the costume we have called "Hindu." This extends even to drummer boys, whose curly locks give them an aspect so unlike what is usually met with in India. Was it an artificial fashion, or were they foreigners? These questions have been before alluded to, for if we could answer them we might be able to say whence Buddha acquired the curly hair with which he is always represented in modern times. Except in the bas-relief (Plate XXVII. Fig. 1.), men are seldom so represented in the Sanchi sculptures, and then only persons in the condition of servants, who sometimes have curly heads, but boys are generally represented with hair in this form. There is no representation of Buddha at Sanchi after he had assumed the garb of an ascetic, but at Amravati, in the most modern sculptures, there are several, and in all these he has the short curly locks he always afterwards retained. I cannot help an impression that he acquired the peculiarity in Afghanistan, though still at a loss to account for the presence of a woolly-haired race in that province.

The trees here are of the usual character, except one above the Bo-tree, which looks like a vine. The architecture is identical with what is found in all these sculptures at Sanchi, and is no doubt a faithful representation of the style of the period.

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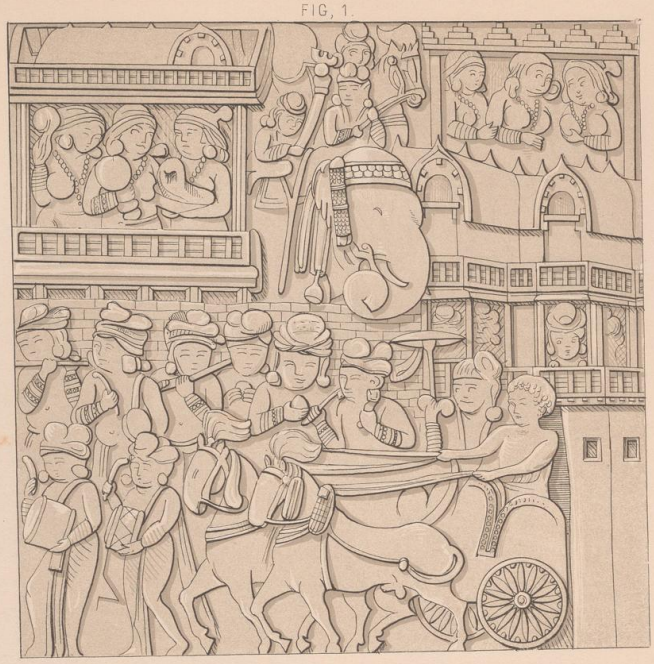
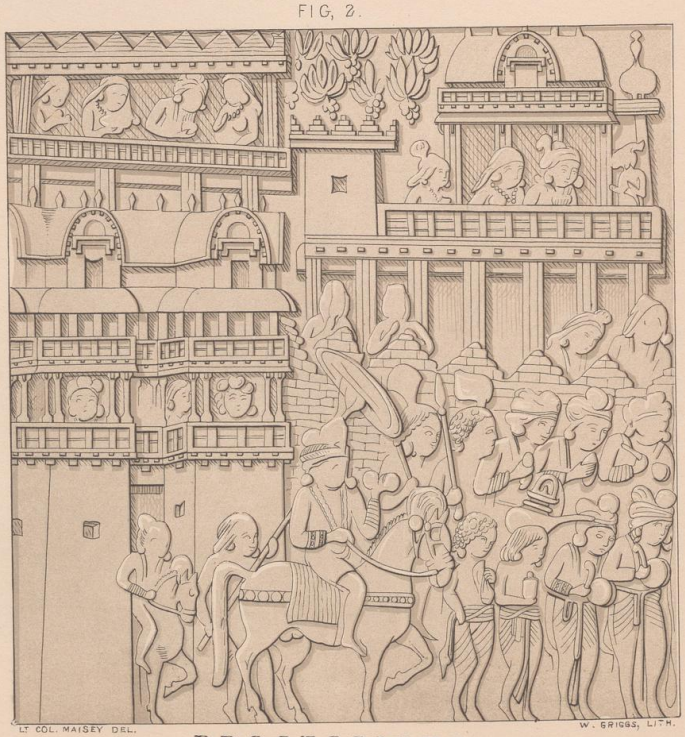
* The fifes we have met with before, and shall frequently have occasion to notice them again in the sequel. Yet, so far as we can learn, the "flauto traverso," or flute breathed into at the side without a mouth-piece, was not known in Europe before the thirteenth century. Is it an Indian invention?

FIG, 1.



FIG, 2.



LT COL. MAISEY DEL. W. GRIGGS, LITH.

PROCESSIONS.

PLATE XXXIV.

THE two processional scenes represented in this Plate are both from the left-hand pillar of the Northern Gateway, one in front, the other on the inside (Plates XI. and XII.). There is nothing at first sight to distinguish these scenes from those on the last slab, but they are interesting as showing varieties of costume and of instruments which were not so distinctly depicted in the preceding Plates. The architecture of the palace is also here very clearly expressed. It is of wood, but so detailed that there would be little difficulty in restoring the building from its representation. The little square tower or pavilion, with its triangular battlements, which is introduced in the lower picture of the Plate, as well as in the last, though not exactly similar, is probably intended to identify the two as part of the same palace. The peacock which is seen in both may be introduced for the same purpose. Eating and drinking is going on at a great rate in the palace, and outside one boy bears the large spouted vessel like a teapot, but which probably contained some more exciting beverage than tea. The curly heads are here carefully distinguished from those with flowing hair. This is particularly remarkable in the case of the two boys in front of the Raja on horseback, in the lower bas-relief, but even there is nothing the least negroid in the faces. So far as features are concerned, they seem of the same type, but the distinction as regards the hair is carefully marked.

In the two pictures of this Plate, the Prince, whether on horseback or in his chariot, is easily distinguished by the umbrella borne over his head, but in both he bears in his hand an emblem we have not met with before, nor do we meet with it again. It consists of two balls joined together like a dumb-bell. So far as I know it is not found on coins, nor on any other sculptures, and I am, therefore, quite at a loss to suggest what it may be intended to represent.

These processions are more frequent at Amravati than even here, and as all are nearly of the same type, one cannot help suspecting that they were intended to represent the most popular legend in Buddhist mythological history. In the fourteenth chapter of the Lalita-Vistara, and elsewhere, we are told that whilst the Prince Siddhârtha was in the full enjoyment of all the pleasures of his rank, and of the most perfect domestic happiness with his wife, Gopâ Devî, he one day, while driving in his chariot from the city to his pleasure gardens, met an old, decrepid, grey-haired man, feebly stumbling along the road. The sight made a deep impression on the Prince, and he reflected that even his rank could not protect him from decay. Some time afterwards, while proceeding in the same manner, he met a poor man, squalid with disease; and a third time, a corpse. Both these gave rise to similar reflections on the ills that flesh is heir to. A fourth time he met a healthy, well-clad, and contented-looking man, wearing the robes of persons dedicated to religion; and, satisfied that this was the true career for man, he determined to sacrifice station, wife, family, everything, and devote himself henceforward to the redemption of mankind from the ills they had heretofore been subject to.

These four, which are called the "predictive signs," are singular favourites with the Buddhist legendary artists, and one cannot help suspecting that allusion to them is intended here; but if so, it is the play of Hamlet with the *rôle* of the Prince omitted. In no instance can the man suffering from age, disease, or death be detected. The initiated may, perhaps, recognize the scene by some mark, but neither at Sanchi nor Amravati is it distinguishable to the unassisted vision of the profane.

These two bas-reliefs are also interesting in showing very distinctly the mode in which the horses were harnessed to the chariot, and the form of the bridles by which they were guided. Arrian tells us that "the Indians have neither saddles "nor bridles, like those which the Greeks and Celts make use of, but instead of "bridles they bind a piece of raw bullock's hide round the lower part of the horse's "jaws, to the inner part of which the common people fix spikes of brass or iron, "not very sharp, but the richer ones have them of ivory. Within the horse's mouth "is a piece of iron like a dart to which the reins are fastened."* If this was the mode employed by the Indians in Alexander's time, they seem to have benefited by their intercourse with the west before the Sanchi sculptures were executed. If any one will compare the head stalls of the bridles represented in the Plate, with Figs. 6., 7., and 8. of Plate III., they will see how perfect the head gear of these horses had become; but the sculptures still leave it uncertain whether the horse was controlled by a bit in his mouth or by pressure on front of his face above his nostrils. An examination of the sculptures themselves might settle this point, though neither our drawings nor our photographs suffice for this purpose.

* Arrian, Indica, chap. XVI.

FIG. 1.

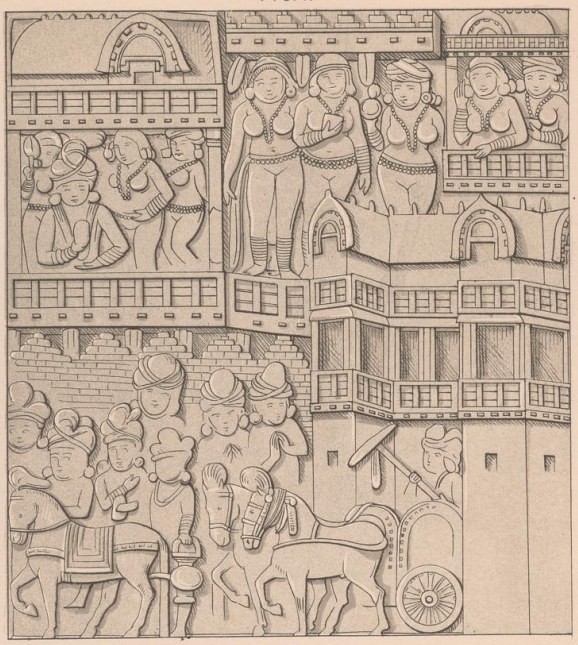
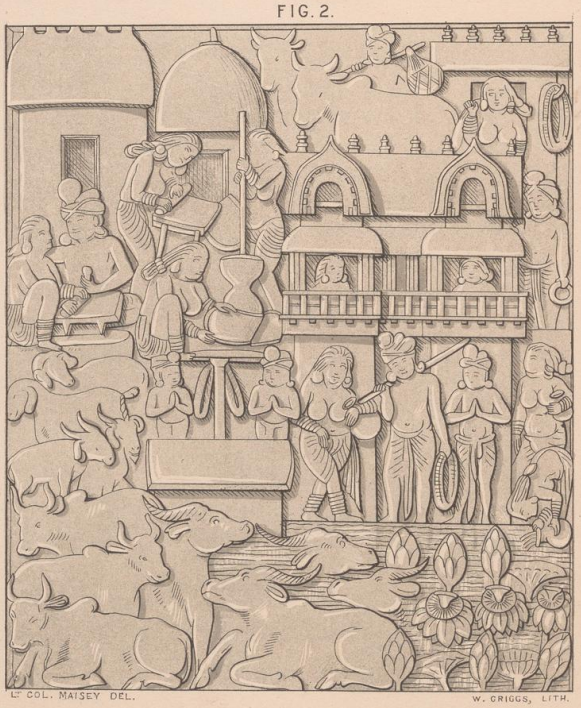


FIG. 2.



Lt. COL. MAISEY DEL. W. GRIGGS, LITH.

SACRED HORSE AND DOMESTIC SCENE.

PLATE XXXV.

THE procession represented in the upper picture of this Plate is of a different character from those just described. It occurs in the front of the right-hand pillar of the Northern Gateway (Plate XII.). The second form the top. In this bas-relief the principal object is the sacred Horse richly caparisoned, who heads the procession, and towards whom all eyes are turned. Immediately behind him follows the man with the spouted pot, and behind him a chief in his chariot, bearing the umbrella of state, not over himself, but apparently in honour of the Horse. Above him sits a young chief, with two women with Chaoris, but no Chatta, and in a balcony on his left three more women, and in an upper balcony, two others looking out.

It is not easy to determine whether this scene is intended to represent the beginning of an Aśvamedha or of some minor ceremony in which the Horse bore a principal part. The whole, however, looks more like a scene from the Mâhâbhârata than from the Lalita-Vistara, and one is almost tempted to call the man in the chariot Arjuna, and the king in the balcony Yudhishṭhira. They may, however, be intended for very different personages, and must for the present go without names.

When speaking of the sculptures at Amravati, we shall have frequent occasion to revert to this subject, for the Horse there plays a more important part than he does at Sanchi, so much so as to open a wide door of speculation as to the connexion of this worship with that of the Sun god of the Scythians, in the still more mysterious worship of Poseidon by the Greeks. We learn from Herodotus* and others how important Horse worship and Horse sacrifices were considered by the Scythians, and cognate tribes, while we must not forget that both he (vide supra, p. 21) and Diodorus† represent the Scythians as born from a woman who was a serpent from the waist downwards. They were essentially a Nâga race, and their worship of the horse and their Amazonian tendencies all point to similarities between them and the people depicted in these sculptures, which must lead to the most curious ethnographical developments, so soon as they are properly investigated.

I refrain from entering on the subject here, for in the first place it is hardly germane to the main object of the work, but more because to treat of the worship of the Horse, and the importance of the sacrifices in which he was a principal object, would require an investigation nearly as intricate as that of Serpent Worship, and almost as large a work to explain its historical and ethnographical peculiarities. Next after the Serpent the Horse was probably the most important object in that old prehistoric animal-worshipping religion which prevailed among the Turanian races of mankind. After him came the Bull, known in Egypt as Apis, and now in India as Nandi. To complete this work, after the Tree and the Serpent, ought to come the Horse and the Bull. The two last must, however, be left for future

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* I. 216, IV. 61, 72, &c. † II. 43.

explorers in the regions of mythology. The Bull, because he does not occur in our sculptures, and the Horse, because, though he appears frequently, it is not with such prominence that it is necessary to do more than notice his presence.

It is much more difficult to fix anything like a definite meaning to the scene represented in the lower figure of the Plate. It no doubt tells a tale sufficiently familiar to those who first looked on the picture, but whether we shall now be able to recover the legend is more than doubtful. There seems no one character in the group sufficiently prominent to give him a name, and no action sufficiently defined to hang a legend upon.

In the upper left-hand corner four women are engaged in occupations sufficiently familiar to all who have visited the East; one is winnowing the grain, which a second pounds in a mortar, and a third rolls out into chitpattees. A fourth is engaged in the same occupation as the last, or ought to be, but is flirting instead with a man who sits beside her.

Below this group is an altar, with the sacred Chatta over it, under which two boys stand in attitudes of prayer, and around it are grouped buffaloes, oxen, sheep, and goats. Are they being blessed? or are they worshipping? On the right hand stands a man on the edge of a pond, into which a girl is pouring water; he has a wreath (or is it a net?) in one hand and a pole in the other, and beside him another man with his hands joined in an attitude of prayer. Next to him stands a woman with a water-pot under her arm. Above them other men and women, and at the top of the picture a man with a bundle driving two oxen either to field or to market. It seems almost impossible to make a story out of so disconnected a picture as this. It may after all be merely meant to represent the family and the pastoral wealth of the giver of the Gateway, in the same manner as the pictures on the tombs round the Great Pyramid represent similar scenes in ancient Egypt. But whether this or any more recondite meaning should be given to it, it is a curious illustration of costumes, and life and manners in India in the first century of the Christian era.

This bas-relief occurs at the top of the left-hand pillar of the Eastern Gateway on the inner face (Plate XIV.).

SANCHI.

FIG. 1.

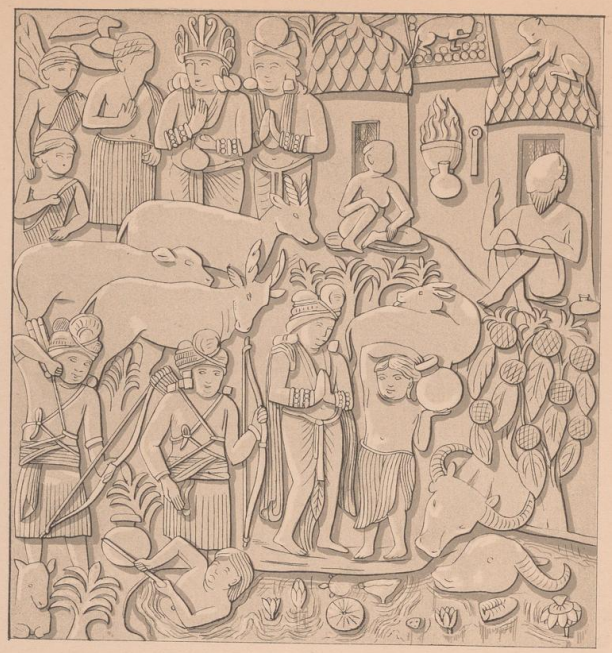

FIG. 2.

Lt COL. MAISEY DEL. A. GRIGGS, LITH.

FOREST SCENE.

PLATE XXXVI.

The scene represented in the lower figure of this Plate may possibly be an early version of one of the most favourite legends of the Buddhist chroniclers. It is mentioned by Fa-Hian,* and is narrated at length with the most miraculous accompaniments both in the Ceylonese Atthakathâ† and the Tibetan Lalita-Vistara.‡ It is briefly this: when the Prince Siddhârtha had reached his sixteenth year, his father sought a wife for him among the daughters of the neighbouring Rajas. All refused, however, because the Prince, though handsome, had not been taught any martial accomplishment, and was therefore incapable of controlling women. To prove his power in this respect, he strung a bow that no one else could string, pierced with his arrows iron targets thicker than those of the Warrior or Minotaur, and at distances which neither Armstrong or Whitworth could face; and lastly, shot an arrow an inconceivable distance, and where it lighted a spring of water gushed forth, which afterwards Fa-Hian tells us was formed into a fountain for travellers.

The only points of resemblance between the picture and the legend are, that a young warrior is shooting across a river, apparently at a rock, out of which a spring of water is gushing. If this is the Prince Siddhârtha, the man on horseback, with the Chatta over his head, must be the Śâkya Daṇḍapâṇi, the father of the lovely Gopâ, and the man seated above his head, talking to the monkey, one of his defeated rivals. Two others are standing behind him. These three may be Ânanda, Devadatta, and Saundaranda.§

In the foreground are three warriors armed with bow and sword, and beside them the usual accompaniment of drums and fifes.

The scene in which the action takes place is represented as a wood, inhabited by monkeys, who are gamboling among the trees, or seated in holes in the rocks. Through the picture runs a river, full of fish, and on its further bank two deer are lying. In none of the versions of the legend are we given to understand that the scene of the competition was in a forest; but we must recollect that the oldest written version we possess, which gives the details of the scene, is at least 400 years more modern than the sculpture, and in India far less time is sufficient to overlay the simplest facts with the most preposterous fables. It may, however, be that by representing a forest and a river, as intervening between the place where the prince was standing and the object he was shooting at, the artist intended to convey an idea of distance.

The bas-relief is the upper one on the standing pillar of the Western Gateway on the front face. (Plate XIX.)

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* Foě-Kouě-Ki, XXII. p. 198.
† J. A. S. B., VII. 804.
‡ Lalita-Vistara, XII., 147, et seq. See also Cunningham, Bhilsa Topes, p. 219.
§ Ibid., 147.

The upper picture in this Plate represents one of those transactions between the Hindus and Dasyus, which have probably only a local meaning, and to which, therefore, it is improbable we shall ever be able to affix any definite meaning. It occupies the corresponding position to that last described, but on the fallen pillar of the Western Gateway.

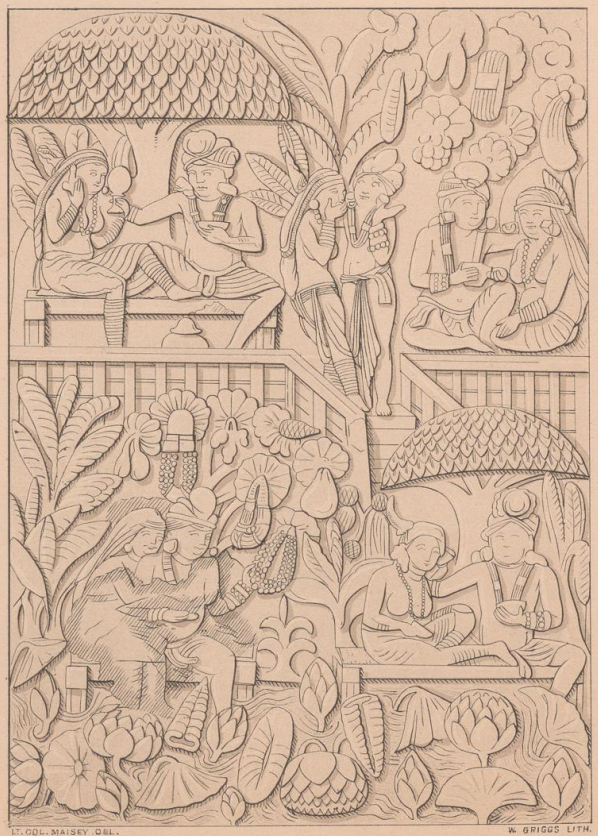
In the centre of the upper part of the picture a Hindu Chief or Raja, accompanied by his minister, is conversing with a Dasyu, whose two wives or daughters are seen beyond him on his left hand. On the Raja's right are two of the ordinary circular huts of the Dasyus, in front of which a man and woman are seated naked. They are sitting on their lower garments, and their upper cloaks are hung in their huts. Two monkeys are playing above them. Between these two huts is seen the fire-pot, which is almost an invariable accompaniment wherever these Dasyus are represented. Below it is the water-pot, and beside it the ladle or pincers. From their position here, they would seem to be the sacred implements of the tribe. Did Fire and Serpent Worship go together? Whatever these implements may be, their universal presence in every scene where the Dasyus appear, and their absence in every representation in which the Hindus are the principal actors, point to a distinction which the sculptors of the Gateways meant to be typical. Whenever they can be identified with certainty, we shall know who the people were who employed them. One only thing, at present, seems clear—that they have no connexion with Buddhism, or with any Buddhistic ceremony with which we are at present acquainted.

The middle of the picture is occupied by deer, below which is a scene which it seems impossible to interpret. A Hindu, apparently of rank, is addressing, with his hands joined as in supplication, a stout Dasyu boy, who bears a large waterpot on his shoulder. To their right two Hindu soldiers, in full equipment, are standing, one of whom is deliberately shooting a Dasyu boy, who is half concealed in the water. There is nothing in the picture to explain why the poor boy should be shot, and I know of no legend which could throw any light on the transaction.

The dress of the soldiers is worthy of remark. They wear a kilt, and the usual cummerbund or waistband, and cross straps to carry their quivers. Their bows are bows of double flexure, which we usually associate with the Parthians or Amazons, but it is doubtful whether any ethnographic distinction can be founded on this peculiarity.

FIG. 1.

FIG. 2.



LT. COL. MAISEY DEL. W. GRIGGS LITH.

GARDEN SCENE.

PLATE XXXVII.

If the two scenes depicted in this Plate can be considered as anything like a fair representation of Buddhist feeling or Buddhist manners in the first century of our era, they present this faith in a marvellously different aspect from anything we have hitherto been taught to believe. If these had been found on a Palace Gateway, it might have been said that the manners of the Palace were not those of the Temple; but the upper one of these is that carved on the front of the Northern Gateway (Plate XII.). The other is the upper compartment in front of the fallen pillar of the Western Gateway.

In the first we have on the right hand a Hindu gentleman playing on a harp, and singing to a lady who is sitting beside him, with her feet in the water of a fountain, and listening with no unwilling ear to her lover's song.

In the opposite compartment the lady is sitting on the gentleman's knee, and he is drinking something out of a cup which certainly is stronger than water.

In the foreground some ladies are disporting themselves in the water with two elephants, and the whole scene is one of pleasure and sensual enjoyment. The only costume of the ladies, except their chignons, is their bead belt and their bangles, but they have not all of them even this. The men are slightly better clad, but even they have more cloth in their turbans than in any other part of their dresses.

The lower bas-relief is of a very similar character. It is divided practically into four compartments, in each of which two persons, male and female, are seated on couches. Two of these groups are close to the waters of a lake, in which lotus are shown as growing; two others are on a terrace, in the centre of which a flight of steps leads from the lake. On each of the couches a man and woman are seated in close conversation, to use the mildest term, and all are drinking. Below, or in front of the couch of the couple in the left-hand upper corner, is the wine pot or jar, which continually recurs in the lithographs from the first (Plate XXIV.), but nowhere can it be so distinctly surmised that it contains an intoxicating liquid as here.*

On the top of the steps, between the two upper couple, stand a man and woman, evidently servants, the woman giggling most unmistakeably, and holding her hand to her mouth to prevent an explosion of hilarity, and not without reason. The man, too, turns up his eyes in amazed astonishment.

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* We ought not to be surprised that drinking should be a favourite indulgence in these days. The Mahâ Bhârata is full of drinking scenes, and many of its episodes turn on the results of intoxication. Even the gods in those days got drunk on Soma juice; why not poor mortals? In addition to this, we must bear in mind that though the Hindus of the plains are so remarkable for their temperance, all the hill tribes drink joyously to the present day. No ceremony, civil or religious, takes place without drinking and dancing, and the festival generally is brought to a close by all—the men, at least—being so drunk as to be unable to continue it.

The arbours under which two of the couples are seated, are curious instances of that sort of summer-house which may be found adorning tea gardens in the neighbourhood of London at the present day.

It is scenes like these that make us hesitate before asserting that there could not possibly be any connexion between Buddhism and Wodenism. As we shall see in the next Plate, Buddhists could also fight—for a religious purpose, it is true,—but still if Hindus of that faith could fight and drink even to the modified extent to which we find them practised here in the first century after Christ, it requires only a moderate knowledge of political arithmetic to calculate what may have taken place a few centuries earlier. The authors of the Mahâbhârata gloat as joyously over the slaughter of the myriads that lay unburied on the fatal battle field of Kurukshetra after eighteen days fight, as any Scandinavian scald could have done over the deeds of any of Wodin's companions; and if Hindus could then drink and fight, as we have every reason to suppose they did, the gulf between the two religions was not at one time so impassable as it afterwards appears to have become. If we would understand the subject, we must turn from those books which have hitherto been our only sources of information, and look back to a time before the iron of asceticism had eaten into the souls of the followers of Śâkya Muni.

FIG. 1.

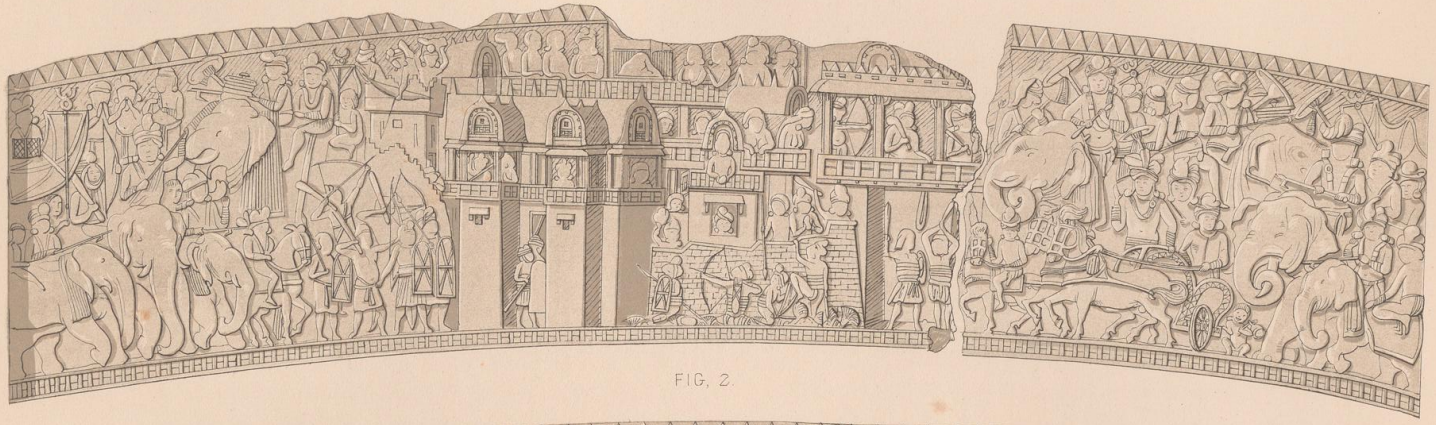
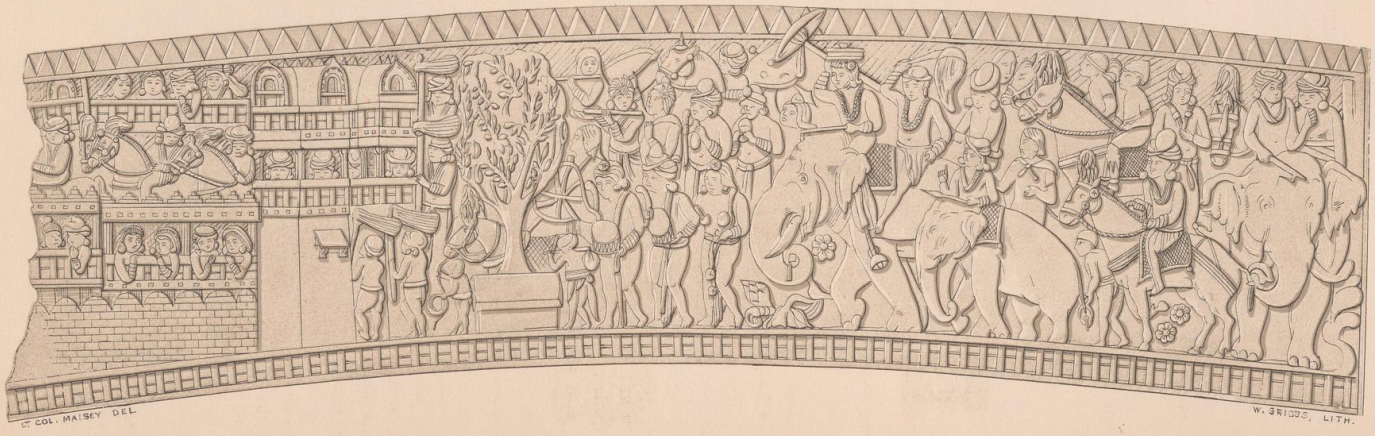


FIG. 2.

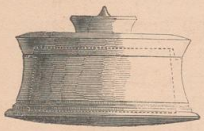


SIEGE AND RECOVERY OF THE RELICS.

PLATE XXXVIII.

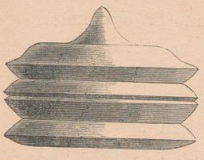
From love to war the transition in the history of most nations is easy and direct, but we hardly expect to meet either in the annals of Buddhism. It is not difficult, however, to see from the upper bas-relief in this Plate taken from the fallen fragments of the Southern Gateway what was the cause of the war thereon depicted. It represents a siege, but on either side an elephant is escaping, bearing a relic casket on his head, and that casket shaded by the sacred Chatta, denoting its importance. It is impossible to say, of course, what these relics are, or what the city that is besieged, but it is at least curious that the caskets are almost perfect pictures of those which contain the relics of Śâriputra and Moggalâna, which were deposited in the neighbouring Topes close at hand. Nothing can be more probable than that the acquisition of these important relics should form the subject of a bas-relief, but we have no record of when they were originally deposited, or whether they were stolen from Sanchi and again recovered, nor by whom they were finally enshrined in the Tope from which they were so lately exhumed.

No. 16.



Relic Casket of Śâriputra, from Satdhara Tope.
From a Drawing by Colonel Maisey.

No. 17.



Relic Casket of Moggalâna, from No. 3. Tope.
From a Drawing by Colonel Maisey.

On the right we have three Princes, or at least three Chattawallahs. The principal of these seems to be the one in the chariot; but none of them are armed, or seem inclined to take any part in the fight. On the left, also, we have a chief, without a Chatta on his elephant, with a smaller one in either hand; but he too looks more like a spectator than a sharer in the fight.

In the centre the siege is carried on vigorously. Two men on the right with the kilt and a breastplate like a Roman soldier, are acting as slingers. A body of archers and spearmen are assaulting a low outwork in the centre, and bowmen and spearmen are storming the gateway, at which two of the assailants seem to have effected an entrance.

The besieged defend themselves with arrows and spears, and throw down large masses of stone on the heads of their assailants; but what seems strange, no engines of war are used,—neither ladders nor battering rams,—nor is any attempt made to set fire to the place. In all these respects the Hindus seem to have been very much behind the stage we know from the Nineveh sculptures that the Assyrians reached at a much earlier age.

The other bas-relief, from the fragments of the Western Gateway, forms part of a larger subject, the first part of which has not been drawn, and we therefore quote Colonel Maisey's description of it. "It represents a long procession approaching a

" city whence it is watched by numerous spectators. First, march four standard bearers, " then come musicians, men with spears and shields, others with palm branches, " some look backwards, and seem to be adoring their elephants, which come after " them. These carry Mahouts, with Chaori and Chatta bearers, and are attended " by numerous pedestrians, some with swords and shields, some with bundles, and " one with a spouted vessel. After these come a two-horsed chariot, containing a " man attended by Chatta and Chaori bearers, the hero of the procession, which " is probably a triumphal return from some warlike or religious expedition. The " rear is brought up by horsemen, and two more mounted elephants."

The upper lintel contains what seems a continuation of the above, and is shown in the lower figure of this Plate. On the left is seen a city, into which the head of the procession has already penetrated. Four men, with horse-tail standards, next approach, then a horse led by a boy. The procession is here interrupted by a sacred Tree behind an altar, behind which come the usual array of musicians, led by a man bearing a shield with the union jack upon it. Behind the musicians comes the elephant of state, with three riders, one of whom bears the relic casket on his head, the other two the Chatta and Chaori. The rear is brought up by more elephants and horsemen, one of whom looks remarkably like a modern jockey!

It seems quite clear that the object of these bas-reliefs is to represent the acquisition or recovery of some important relics by the community at Sanchi, and as the sculptures are the gifts of private individuals, the events depicted probably occurred at some date considerably anterior to that of the sculptures themselves. My impression is that the relics are those of Śâriputra and Moggalâna, and the hero of the triumph, Aśoka himself. But this, in the present state of our knowledge, to say the most of it, is little more than conjecture. Be this as it may, these two bas-reliefs are of great interest, in the first place, as showing the state of the arts in India in the early centuries of the Christian era. They certainly are superior to any of the Assyrian sculptures depicting similar scenes, and can hardly be said to be inferior to contemporary sculptures on Trajan's column or similar subjects at Rome.

As illustrations of costume, they are also of great value; but perhaps their most curious peculiarity is their being illustrative of a religious Buddhist war! So far as we know, no war was ever undertaken by a Buddhist community for the sake of propagating their faith or extending the area of their religion. But the desire to possess relics seems to have roused passions antithetical to the usual form of their faith, and they fought either to acquire or to recover these most valued treasures, and they triumphed gloriously when they brought back these treasures to the sanctuary, where they reposed till disturbed by the antiquarian curiosity of two Englishmen in 1854!

FIG. 1.

LT COL. MAISEY DEL.

FIG. 2.

W. GRIGGS, LITH.

LION CAPITALS.

SANCHI.

FIG 1.

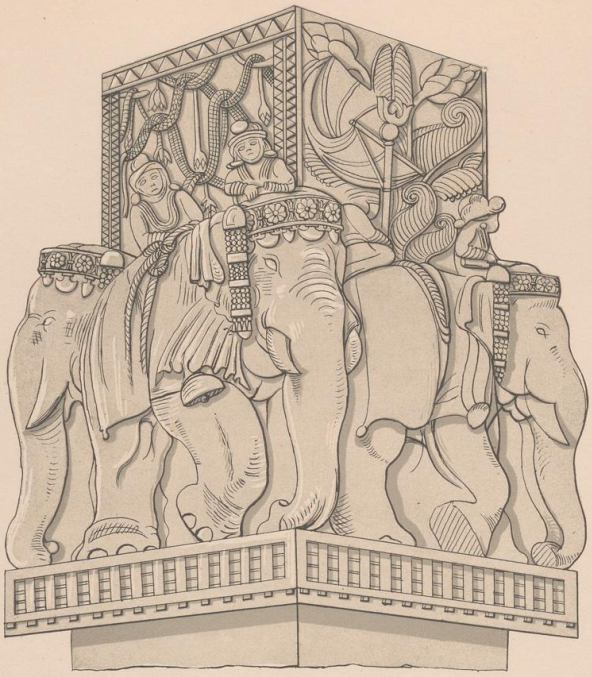
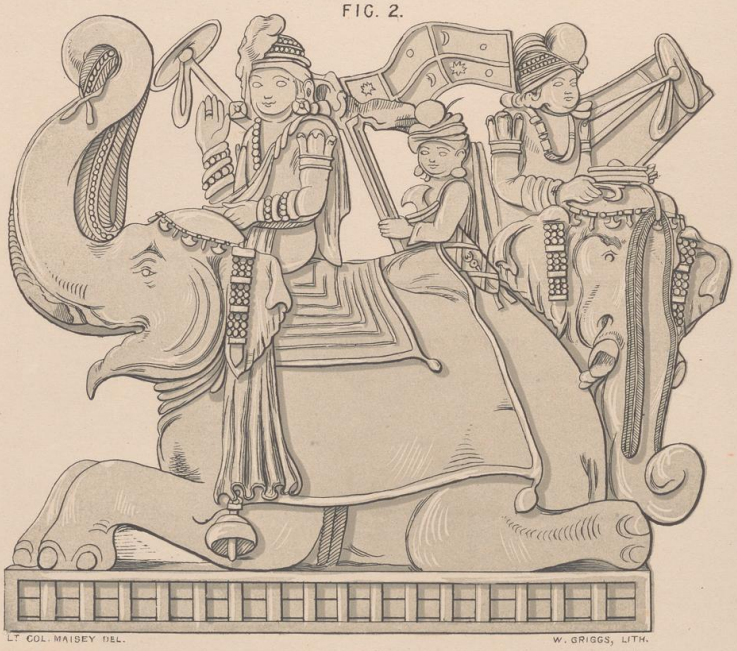


FIG. 2.



LT COL. MAISEY DEL. W. GRIGGS, LITH.

ELEPHANT CAPITALS.

FIG. 1.

FIG. 2.

Lt. Col. Waiser del. W. Griggs, Lith.

FIGURES OF BUDDHA AND DWARF CAPITAL.

PLATES XXXIX., XL., AND XLI.

PLATE XXXIX.

THE lion capital (Fig. 1.) in this Plate once adorned a lât that stood immediately in front of the Southern Gateway of the great Tope. From a comparison of the style, and especially of the honeysuckle ornament and the sacred geese of its abacus, with what we find on pillars at Allahabad and Tirhoot, which undoubtedly were erected by Aśoka, we may feel quite confident that this too was erected by him. If this is so, it proves either that the great Tope was erected by that monarch, or that he erected this pillar as an additional ornament to a pre-existing monument. For reasons above given, my conviction is that the Tope was erected by him also, and its date consequently is not far from 250 B.C.

The other capital is that of the fallen Southern Gateway, and seems evidently to be imitated from the older one in its immediate proximity. The honeysuckle ornament has become Indianized, and the execution of the lions is stiff and conventional. It may be suggested that this inferiority may be partly owing to the circumstance that the original lion sculptors came from the north-west—from Bactria—where lions abounded, and that Malwa afforded no models from which the true nature of the animal could be studied. But, on the whole, it seems as probable that they indicate a decay of art from the time when it was first introduced into India under Grecian or rather Bactrian influence, till about the Christian era. Unfortunately we have very little that was executed between these two periods that would enable us to settle this question. The one thing at present known that seems to belong to the period, is the sculpture in the Caves at Cuttack,* but they have not yet been drawn with that critical accuracy which would enable us to reason regarding them. Against this view, on the other hand, we have the superior elegance of the figure sculpture at Amravati three centuries later. It is of course rash to generalise from the very few data we have, but judging from them alone, it may be said that animal sculpture declined from Aśoka's time till the Christian era, but that figure sculpture improved, or at least became more refined, between the epochs of Sanchi and Amravati.

It may be observed, *en passant*, that the winged lion on the abacus of Fig. 2. is much more nearly allied to his Assyrian, or rather Persian prototype, than his degenerate descendants at Amravati.

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* J. A. S. B., vol. VII., plates XLII. and XLIV.

PLATE XL.

The lower group of elephants in Plate XL. is likewise from the Southern Gateway; it is on one of the blocks over the pillars which separate the architraves into parts (Plate XVI.). It is another indication of the greater antiquity of the Southern Gateway, inasmuch as though not a capital itself, it is evidently just such a suggestion as might lead to the design of the elephant capitals of the Northern or Eastern Gateway, one of which is represented in the upper figure of this Plate.

The figure on the elephant in front of the lower one appears to be royal, from the Chatta borne over his head, and to be followed by another elephant, bearing a relic casket on his head, over which the Chatta of State is displayed. The standard which is borne behind him is of the stars and stripes pattern, while that on the upper capital from the Eastern Gateway is the union jack design; both have the Buddhist Trisul emblem, though in the lower one it is partially broken away. The truth and vigour with which the elephants are sculptured in both these groups go far to disturb the theory just hinted at of a general decline of art at the period they were sculptured, and must rather favour the idea that it was in the representation of lions only that the sculptors of Sanchi had broken down.

PLATE XLI.

The lower figure of the Plate represents the capital of the Western Gateway, which is identical in design with those of the smaller or No. 3. Tope (Plate XXI.), and therefore probably of the same age, though, as before hinted, it is a little difficult to determine what that age may be. I have before stated my reasons for believing that the Western Gateway was the last erected, though it is difficult to understand how, after executing anything so beautiful as the lion and elephant capitals of the other Gateways, they could perpetrate anything so detestable as these. A desire of novelty may have led to the adoption of the dwarfs, after their introduction on the middle architrave of the Northern Gateway (Plate VII.), or they may have a mythological meaning we fail to detect.

The figure of Buddha (Plate XLI. Fig. 1.) from the Vihâra is introduced here because it is similar to four figures which now stand against the Tope inside the Rail, and on which it has been attempted to found an argument as to their antiquity. This one, however, has upon it the familiar "Ye hetu dharma" inscription in the Kuṭila characters of the tenth century, and these, with other indications from the locality where it is found, prove that it cannot be earlier than that date. This is, besides, about the date that must be assigned to it from its style, by anyone familiar with Indian sculpture. The others may be earlier, but not by any long period, though without photographs or drawings it is impossible to say what their exact age may be.

SANCHI.

FIG. 1.

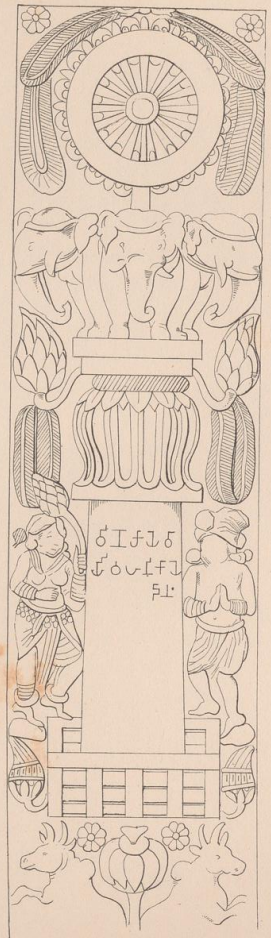


FIG. 2.

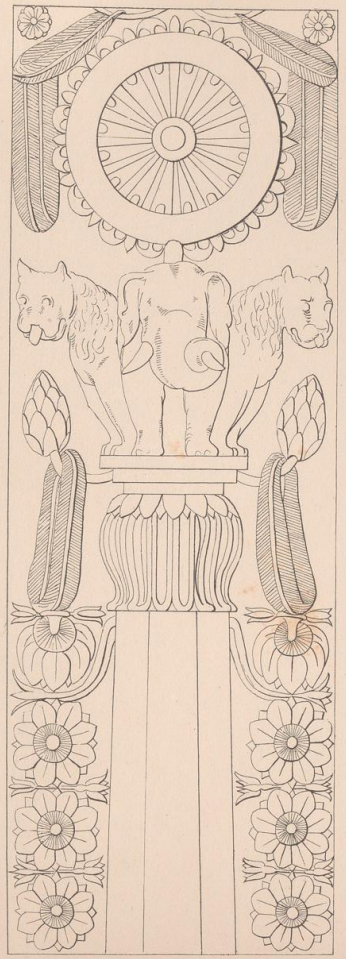


FIG. 3.

Lt COL. MAISEY DEL.

W. GRIGGS, LITH. INDIA MUSEUM

CHAKRA PILLARS FROM SMALLER TOPES.

FIG. 1.

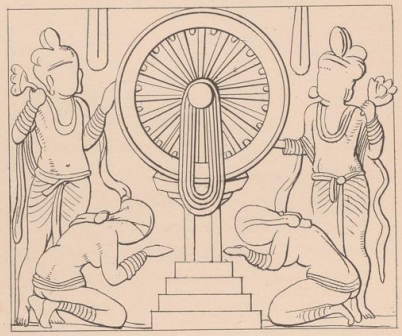


FIG. 2.

LT COL. MAISEY DEL.

FIG. 3.

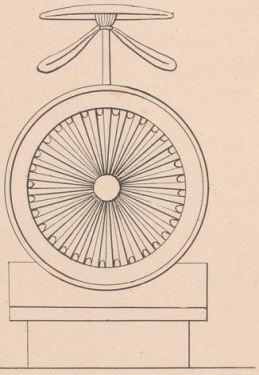


FIG. 5.

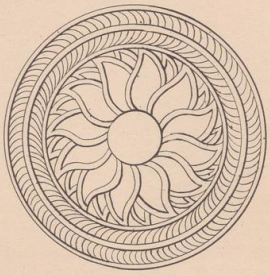
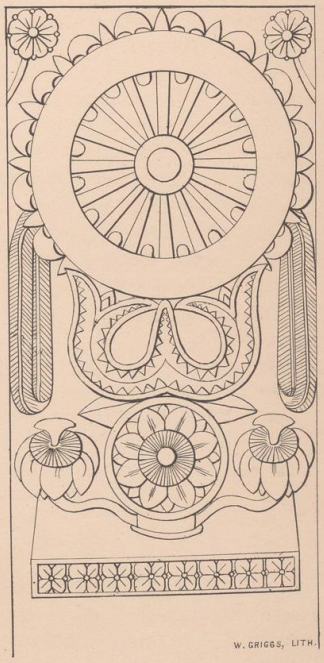


FIG. 4



W. GRIGGS, LITH.

DETAILS OF SCULPTURE.

PLATES XLII. AND XLIII.

For reasons given above, page 91, it seems probable that the Rail of the smaller Tope (No. 2., in plan, Plate I.), is intermediate indate between that of the Rail of the great Tope and of the Gateways which were added to it in the first century of our era. Were it not, however, for the form of the characters in which its inscriptions are written, there are circumstances which might induce us to ascribe to it a date even more modern than their erection. Eventually it may turn out that it is so, but for the present we must be content to assume that it was erected about one century before the Christian era.

There are no bas-reliefs, properly so called, on the Rail, but all the discs on the pillars are sculptured (Figs. 2. and 5., Plate XLIII., are examples) "either with "rosettes, human or animal figures, monsters, emblems, and other objects, very "poorly executed, and, with one or two exceptions, not worth a detailed description." Among these, Colonel Maisey enumerates "elephants, seated female with lotus, bull, "monster with alligator's head and fish's tail, five-headed Naga, wheel, tortoise,— "emblem of Kâśyapa,—monster half lion half fish, lion, lion with bull in his mouth, "woman riding a male centaur, horseman, female centaur, snake, canopied female "figure mounted on human-headed animal, bird killing snake, &c." "The angle "pillars of the entrance," he adds, "are rather more decorated, and some of them "of very superior execution." Two of these are represented in Plate XLII. Figs. 1. and 2. The first represents the sacred wheel adorned with garlands, and standing on a pillar, surmounted by four elephants; three only are shown, of course; and on one side a woman offering a lotus bud, on the other a man in the attitude of prayer. No. 2. is very similar, except that there are two lions and two elephants on the top of the pillar, and no human figures. Both these wheels are adorned externally by objects like hatchets, but which I have no doubt are meant for the Trisul emblem so frequently alluded to above.

Fig. 3., in Plate XLII., is a representation of a similar object from the Gateway of the small Tope No. 3. (Plate XXI.). It is hardly distinguishable in design from the other two, except that it is more crowded with figures, and Garuḍas or Devas bringing offerings, which apparently do not occur at No. 2. Tope. There is also an attempt at perspective in the capital, and on the whole it looks more modern, but how much it is impossible to say.

PLATE XLIII.

Fig. 1. in this Plate is from one of the gate pillars of No. 2. Tope, and represents two men apparently turning the wheel and two women in attitudes of devotion. Is this the original of the prayer wheel of the Thibetans? Fig. 4. is a combination often met with of the Wheel, with the Trisul emblem. If I am not

mistaken, it means Buddha and the Law, or it may be the Law of Buddha. Fig. 3. on this Plate is a similar combination of a wheel on an altar, with the ennobling Chatta over it. Figs. 2. and 5. have already been described. The first is one of the pillars of No. 2. Tope, the second a rosette, which replaces the five-headed Naga on another of these pillars.

One of the most interesting points connected with these wheel pillars is, that they almost exactly reproduce the pillars that stand in front of the Caves at Karlee and Salsette; not only is their architectural form identical, but the four lions which surmount them are the same, and my impression is that the Karlee pillar once supported a metal wheel, which has now disappeared; but be this as it may, if we are correct in assigning the Karlee Cave to the first century B.C.—which I see no reason for doubting—it is a satisfactory confirmation of the date to find identically the same architectural forms at Sanchi at the same period.

At Amravati, three or four centuries later, the wheel pillars became even more important, and also infinitely more elaborate, and are among the most prominent ornaments of that building.

In Fa-Hian's travels (A.D. 400) we have a description of two pillars, 70 feet high, which adorned the entrance of the Jetavana monastery, outside the gates of Śrâvastî, the old capital of Kośala in Oude, in the time of Śâkya Muni. One of these was surmounted by a wheel, the other by an ox.* So at least he says; but Hiouen Thsang corrects him. When he saw the pillars, more than 200 years afterwards, he calls the ox an elephant, which is much more likely; but the wheel had been replaced by a Dagoba†—a very common form. If the wheel was of metal, it may have been stolen during the reign of some Brahminical king.

It is curious that we almost lose sight of Tree Worship in the sculptures of these smaller Topes, though it forms so prominent a feature in those of the great one. It does occur in No. 3. (see Plate XXI.), but in a very subordinate manner, and I can find no trace of it in Colonel Maisey's descriptions of No. 3. Tope. I do not, however, know that any argument can be based on this. Tree Worship certainly did prevail long before they were erected; but their preference for the Serpent and neglect of the Tree is worthy of attention, and may hereafter lead to some interesting conclusions.

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* Foě-Kouě-Ki, p. 171.

† Si Yü Ki, I. p. 296. It is curious, however, to remark that even he was mistaken at Sankissa, where he describes an elephant on the top of a pillar as a lion, when it was an elephant with only his trunk broken off. It was drawn by General Cunningham, and is engraved from his drawing in my History of Architecture, Woodcut 970.

FIG. 3.

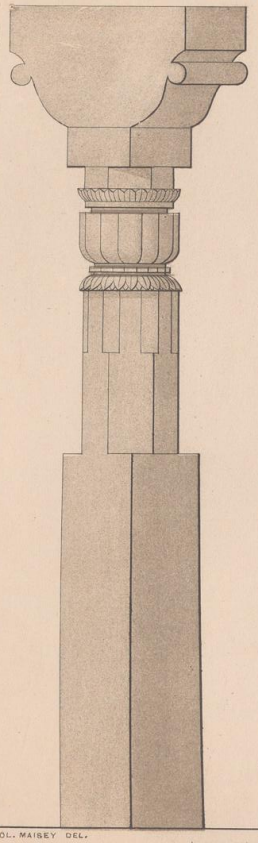


FIG. 1.

FIG. 2.

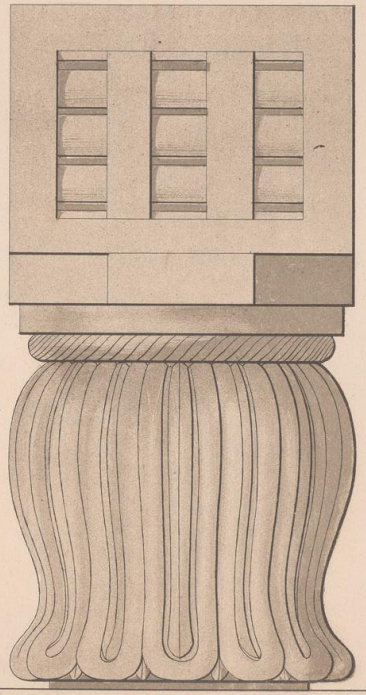
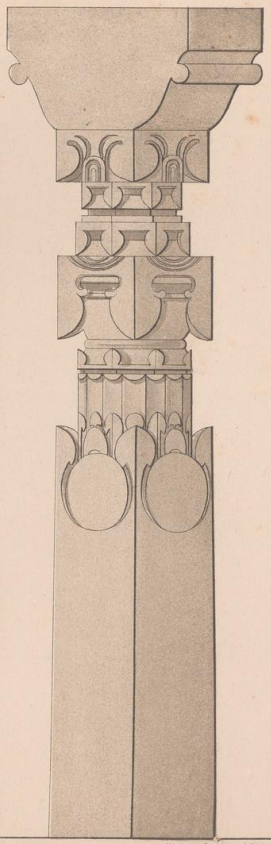


FIG. 4



LT COL. MAISEY DEL.

W. GRIGGS, LITH. INDIA MUSEUM

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS.

FIG 1.

LT COL. MAISEY DEL.

FIG. 2.

W. GRIGGS, LITH.

NAGA CAPITALS.

PLATES XLIV. AND XLV.

THE statue and capital (Figs. 1. and 2.) represented on Plate XLIV. were found lying near the North Gateway, with only a fragment of the shaft that once supported them, the rest having probably been used for sugar mills long ago. The execution of the statue is so extremely good that it would be interesting to fix its date, if possible; but there is no inscription and no indication on the spot to enable us to do so directly. There is, however, at Eran, not far away, a pillar bearing a Gupta inscription, with a capital and statue so nearly identical with this, that the probability is that they may be of about the same age. If I am correct in the date, I assign to the Guptas A.D. 318 to 490; this would place the statue with its pillar in the fourth or fifth century, which, from its style, I am inclined to think is by no means an unlikely date. What adds to this probability is the knowledge that Chandragupta was a benefactor to the Tope at Sanchi. His inscription is seen on the Rail, Plate VIII., and will be found translated in the Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society, vol. VI. 455, and is just such as would lead us to expect some additions to the fane by him about the year 400.

The rays round the head, the absence of a Chatta, or anything indicating kingly state, render it possible that it is intended as a statue of Buddha; in that case one of the earliest known. There are no statues of the great founder of this religion either at Karlee nor the early Caves of Ajanta, and I fancy we must come down to the age of Buddha Ghoso, A.D. 420, before any free standing statues were carved in his honour. But we know too little as yet to express any distinct opinion on such a subject. It is more probable that it represents one of the Gupta kings, or perhaps it is only some other benefactor to the shrine.

The two pillars, Figs. 3. and 4., are from the portico to the Chaitya hall, photographed, Plate XXII. They are very elegant examples of Hindu architecture. Colonel Maisey suggests that the portico may have been added afterwards, and that this may account for their more modern aspect. Applying to them the same test as to the capital and statue, it would seem that they too belong to the Gupta age. If at least the fragments of architecture which are found at Eran belong to the fifth century, which I see no reason to doubt, these must also certainly be ascribed to the same date. It would be extremely interesting if this could be established, for we have no other structural remains in Central India which are known to belong to that age, and the gap so formed is one it would be most desirable to fill up.

The two Naga shrouded statues represented in Plate XLV. are found in the immediate neighbourhood of Sanchi—No. 1. at the village of Ferozepore, the other on the Nagore hill, not far off. They are both probably more modern than the Topes or their sculptures, and, like the statue in the last Plate, may date from the time of the Guptas. Fig. 2. is evidently the most modern of the two. Neither are remarkable as examples of sculpture, but are curious as exemplifying the belief in the efficacy of the protecting hood of the Naga.

Our lithographed illustrations began with a representation of this snake hood on Plate XXIV., which is nearly as old as the Christian era. They terminate with it here, at a period probably as late as the sixth or seventh century. After this period it seems to have faded out of use as applied to mortals, but to have been appropriated either to the Jaina Tîrthankars, or to some of the forms of Vishṇu. It is the common accompaniment of the image of that god even to the present day.

Although it died out in India, the custom still exists elsewhere. In Nepaul, for instance, when it was desired to do honour to one of the late kings, a statue of him was placed on the top of a tall pillar, exactly as is done here; and a cobra, standing on his tail, is represented as spreading his protecting hood over his sacred head.

All this, as well as many other things advanced in the preceding pages, will be much more clear and intelligible when we have described the sculptures at Amravati. The two together form a nearly complete illustration of the arts and architecture of India during the first five centuries of the Christian era; but Amravati is scarcely intelligible without Sanchi, and the contrary is equally the case. Many things which the older and simpler forms leave obscure, become clear when they are read by the light of the more modern gloss. We have hitherto been wholly dependent on the rock-cut examples for all we know on the subject, and they, as before explained, are rude, from the nature of the material in which they are carved, and imperfect from the exigencies of their situation. These two Topes supply their deficiencies, and when the sculptures at Amravati have been described, we shall have a tolerably clear conception of the earliest forms of lithic art in the peninsula of Hindostan.*

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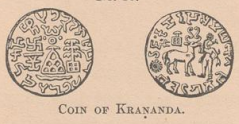
* All the emblems which adorn these Gateways, and which are alluded to in the preceding descriptions, are found with more or less distinctness on the coins of the period. In the annexed example, for instance, Woodcut No. 16, borrowed from Mr. Thomas's paper in the 1st vol. New Series of the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, we have nearly all of them.

No. 16.



Coin of Kraṇanda.

In the centre of the left-hand figure is the conventional representation of a Dagoba surmounted by a Chatta, and above this the circle, and over that the Trisul. If the interpretation suggested in the Woodcut, No. 13, is correct, these symbolize water and air. On the right of the Dagoba is the Tree, very similar in form to the Persian example, Woodcut No. 5, and in the field on the left the swastica, and below it an emblem which is found in the necklace, Plate III., Fig. 4. It may be an altar. Below the Dagoba is seen the Serpent, which is hardly ever omitted from these early coins, and often occupies a more prominent place than he does here. On the other face of the coin the field is occupied by a conventional representation of a deer, attended by a female as lightly clad as those in the bas-reliefs generally are. Over the deer what seems intended as repetition of the Tree emblem, or it may be only the symbol of a sacred enclosure with the ennobling Chatta over it.

The inscription on the two faces of the coin, in old Pali and in Aryan characters, reads, "This is the "coin of the great king, the king Kraṇanda, the brother of Amogha." On the strength of the name, and other indications, Mr. Thomas ascribes this coin to one of the nine Nandas who reigned before 325 B.C. My own impression is that it is more modern, probably subsequent to Aśoka, but certainly anterior to the sculptures of the Sanchi Gateways.