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Tree and serpent worship

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Chapter II. History Of Monument

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CHAPTER II.

HISTORY OF MONUMENTS.

So much of the interest and the value of the sculptures at Amravati depends on the age that may be assigned to them, that it is very desirable, in so far as it is possible, to fix the date to which they belong. In the present state of our knowledge this cannot be done with absolute certainty; first, because none of the inscriptions bear dates, nor, with one doubtful exception,* do any contain names that can be recognized as those of historical personages; next, no history or reliable tradition mentions the place by name, with either a date or the founder's name attached to it. A considerable degree of vagueness also prevails, and always must, because the buildings are not all of one age, but certainly extended through one, it may be through two or even three centuries. Notwithstanding all this, their date may, I believe, be fixed with fair approximate certainty, quite sufficient for our present purposes.

Taking, in the first instance, the architecture of the Sanchi Tope as the base of our argument, no one I think can examine the two without seeing that considerable progress had been achieved between the erection of the two monuments. According to the Indian chronometric scale, I would value the interval as at least two or three centuries, taking the sculptures of the great outer Rail at Amravati as the base for comparison with those of the Gateways at Sanchi. On the other hand, if we turn to the temples at Bhuvaneśvar in Cuttack, which dates from 657 A.D., we feel that we have passed into a new and much more modern architectural world. The question is, to determine where between these two poles lies the epoch of the execution of the principal parts of the Amravati monument.

There seems, however, no difficulty with regard to a final date before which it must have been erected. When Hiouen Thsang visited "Dhanakacheka," about the year 640, he describes the principal monument in the following terms, from which I quote at length because of the many interesting points the description contains:—
 "Un ancien roi de ce royaume l'avait construit en l'honneur du Bouddha et y avait déployé toute la magnificence des palais de Ta-hia (de la Bactriane). Les bois touffus dont il était entouré, et une multitude des fontaines jaillissantes, en faisaient un séjour enchanteur. Ce couvent était protégé par les esprits du ciel, et les sages et les saints aimaient à s'y promener et à y habiter. Pendant l'espace des mille

* This is the name of the Andhra king Yajnaśrí, read doubtfully on a fragment of an inscription copied by Colonel Mackenzie and reproduced, Plate XCIX. No. IX. This king was most probably the Yue-gnai of the Chinese, who we learn from Des Guignes was a zealous Buddhist, and is stated to have sent ambassadors to China in the year 408. If it really is this king who is mentioned in the inscription, his date would perfectly accord with all we learn from other circumstances. His coins and those of Gotamiputra are said to have been found in quantities in and about Amravati.

“ ans qui ont suivi le Nirvāna du Bouddha, on voyait constamment un millier de
 “ laïques et de religieux qui venaient ensemble y passer le temps de la retraite pen-
 “ dant la saison des pluies. Mille ans après (le ‘Nirvāna’) les hommes du siècle et
 “ les sages vinrent y demeurer ensemble. Mais depuis une centaine d’années les
 “ esprits des montagnes ont changé de sentiments et font éclater sans cesse leur
 “ violence et leur colère. Les voyageurs justement effrayés n’osent plus aller dans
 “ ce couvent. C’est pour cela qu’aujourd’hui il est complètement désert, et l’on n’y
 “ voit plus ni religieux ni novices.”*

Before applying this description, the first point necessary to establish is, that Amravati is really the place of which Hiouen Tshang was speaking. The name he gives is of some value for this purpose, for Dhanakacheka is as like the modern Durnacotta or Dharanikotta as we can well expect a name to be after the corruptions of twelve centuries, and Avarasilā for the name of the monastery may also be considered as indicating Amareśvara. Such nominal similarities are hardly sufficient in such a case as this; but if General Cunningham’s reading of the inscription, No. XX. Appendix E., is correct, which I see no reason whatever for doubting, this alone would suffice to settle the question. The slab on which it is found formed part of the inner Rail, and is stated to be a gift to the Māhā Chaitya of Dhankakata. Another proof is found in his route, as described by the traveller himself, which even taken alone would suffice for the purpose. After leaving Orissa he reaches Kalinga,—the Kalinga-paṭṭana of the present day,—a well-known spot on the coast. From this he diverges 1,800 li in a north-west direction, say 260 miles, to Kośala, the southern country of that name. This must have brought him either to Wyraghur or Chanda, or more probably to Bhuddrack, between Chanda and Hinghenghat, where there are extensive ruins; all these were important places in ancient times in the Nagpore territories. The distance quoted would not take him so far as Nagpore, but it might to Nirmul, which offers many points that render it probable it may be the place indicated.† In his next stage he retraces his steps to the south-east, and reaches a place which it can hardly be doubted was Warangal, the capital of Venga or Ping-ki-lo. Thence he journeys 1,000 li in a southern direction (143 miles) to Dhanakacheka.‡ The distance and direction both agree as closely as any of those given in his travels with what we find in our modern maps. The coincidence is indeed so close as to leave it hardly open to doubt but that this is the place indicated, even if the nominal similarity were not in itself sufficient.

With regard to the date, I am afraid that very little reliance can be placed on the 1,000 years twice mentioned in the passage quoted above from Hiouen Tshang. First, because he is evidently speaking loosely and in round numbers; but more because we cannot feel sure when he placed the Nirvāna. If we assume the Ceylonese date

* Histoire de Hiouen Tshang, 188.

† It may be worth noticing here that Nāgārjuna, in his old age, when Śālivāhana was on the throne, is said to have resided in this capital of Kośala which our traveller visited, which is another reason why we should try to ascertain its position, if possible.—Histoire de Hiouen Tshang, 186.

‡ Vivien de St. Martin, in his valuable memoir, takes him from Warangol to Rajamendri on the Godavery, though admitting that this would make his route south-east instead of south. He was not then aware of the existence of Durnacotta, which is in the exact direction and distance indicated. He probably would now adopt this rectification. See Mémoires de Hiouen Tshang, vol. II. p. 396.

(543 B.C.), which we now know to be the correct one, it would place the period of prosperity 457 A.D., which would accord perfectly with what we gather from other circumstances. Although, however, this indication may not be of much value, it seems evident from this passage that about the middle of the sixth century Buddhism had suffered such a blow as to prevent any such work as this being undertaken. Even if it is contended that Dhanakacheka may not be Dharanikoṭṭa, the facts remain the same. From what our author says of what he saw in Kalinga on the one hand and Djourya* on the other, it is evident that, in the century before his visit, war, pestilence, and famine had swept over the three Kalingas, and nearly obliterated the original population. We know, too, that in the neighbouring province of Orissa the Keśari family, worshippers of Śiva, had raised themselves before that time (A.D. 473) on the ruins of the Buddhist dynasty; † and we also know that in the year 605 the Chālukyas conquered Vengā, ‡ the country in which Dharanikoṭṭa was situated, and they were neither Buddhists nor Snake worshippers. From all these circumstances it may therefore fairly be assumed that it was at some time before the middle of the sixth century, or before 550 A.D. at all events, that all the buildings around the Tope were completed.

If we can thus fix, at least approximatively, the period before which our buildings must have been completed, we can with equal probability ascertain the date when they were commenced. In the first place, we find that Colonel Mackenzie collected a considerable number of coins about "Durnacotta." Some of these were Roman, others of the Bactrian Kadphises type, § showing that the place was probably of some importance about the Christian era; but as none of these were found in the Tope itself, they have no direct bearing on our investigation. Those coins which were found in the Tope were all of lead, but their date not having yet been ascertained they at present afford us no assistance in our enquiry. || Among the slabs, however, from the Tope, sent home by Colonel Mackenzie, there is one which bears directly on this point. It is photographed in Plate LXXVIII., Figs. 2. and 3. The sculpture on the front is of the age of the inner Rail, probably the fifth century, but on the back of the same slab is a bas-relief evidently of about the same age as those of the Sanchi Tope. This confirms the evidence we acquire from the coins that a city and buildings did exist here as early as the Christian era, but proves at the same time that none of the buildings we now find there are so early. Some centuries must have elapsed between the times when the sculptures on the back and front of that slab were executed.

Colonel Mackenzie also collected a number of traditions referring to a Mokunti Maharaja ¶ who, among the Hindus on the spot, is the reputed builder of the

* Histoire de Hiouen Tshang, p. 185 and 189, and Mémoires, vol. II p. 116.

† Stirling's Account of Cuttack, Asiatic Researches, vol. XV. p. 264.

‡ Journal R. A. S., N. S., vol. I. p. 254.

§ Asiatic Researches, vol. XVII. p. 561 and 582, Plate II. Fig. 29, c. 41.

|| Asiatic Journal, vol. XV. p. 471. Madras Journal, vol. XIX. p. 220, et seqq.

¶ On the spot it is called the Doop Mogaśāla of Mokunti Maharaja. Mogaśāla, in the Telinga language, signifies a court for public affairs, and the distribution of justice. "Doop" is Hindostani for sun, or rather sunshine; translated into architectural language this would be "Hypethral Basilica." This would perhaps be the best term that could be applied to it; but it involves a theory it is as well to avoid at present. See Asiatic Journal, vol. XV. p. 469.

Tope,* and curiously enough among his own manuscripts there is one which places a Mokunti Raja exactly where we want him, if looking for a founder of the central building, which, from the evidence of the architecture, seems almost certainly to date from about the year 200, which is the date given to this king in that document.† On examination, however, these traditions are found to refer either to Rudra Deva of Warangal (A.D. 1132), or more probably to Pratâpa Rudra of Orissa (A.D. 1503), and have, consequently, no bearing on the date of the monument. They are all of Brahminical origin, and Benares is the scene of action, but like most Puranic traditions they are foolish and fabulous in the extreme, and refer to a persecution, when the last feeble remnants of the Bauddhas, here called Jainas, were finally expelled from India. It is curious to find Buddhists in India as late as the beginning of the sixteenth century; but though this has little reference to our present enquiry, we must bear in mind that the inscription translated by Mr. Prinsep,‡ and Sir Walter Elliot's excavations, prove that Amravati was a temple of the Buddhists at least as late as the twelfth or thirteenth century. My impression is that the Tooth relic again visited the place in 1187, but of this hereafter.

Turning to the monument itself, we find upon it a great number of inscriptions, and my friend General Cunningham has kindly undertaken to investigate this branch of the subject. The result of his labours will be found in Appendix E. Unfortunately they merely record that the pillar, or bas-relief, or object on which they are found, is the gift of some piously-disposed persons whose names are given; but these names, with one doubtful exception, are, unluckily for our purpose, all unknown to fame. At present, therefore, it is only from the form of the characters that the inscriptions aid in ascertaining the date of the monument. Generally this may be described as the Gupta alphabet, as used either immediately before or after A.D. 318. No trace of the Lât character occurs, though that was used in a modified form at Sanchi on the northern limits of the province certainly after the Christian era.§ The inscriptions in which the form of the letters most closely resembles that found at Amravati are those of the Kenheri and Nasick Caves. If Dr. Stevenson|| is right in ascribing these to the first half of the fourth century, and I see no reason to

* Asiatic Journal, vol. XV. p. 470, et seq. Wilson's Catalogue of Mackenzie's MSS., vol. I. p. cxxiv., and Taylor in Madras Selections, Second Series, No. XXXIX. p. 229, et seq.

† Madras Journal, No. 19, April 1838, p. 352.

‡ It is to be regretted that the Daladâvansa has not been completely translated, for it appears that in the twelfth or thirteenth century the tooth relic was taken back to India at a time apparently when (1187) a Kirti Nissanga, a prince of Kalinga, was one of the many Indian princes who held sway in Ceylon. It is said to have been conveyed to the banks of the Ganges (Upham's History of Buddhism, p. 32), but as Landresse suggests (Foë-Kouë-Ki, p. 345) this more probably was the Godavery, or, in other words, the Kistnah. From some particulars furnished me by Sir Walter Elliot, it seems that the part of the monument he dug into was a chapel formed of old slabs arranged unsymmetrically by some prince about that time, so as to form a chapel for some unexplained purpose. It may have been to receive this relic. The inscription translated by Prinsep (J. A. S. B., vol. VI. p. 218) shows that Buddhism was flourishing at Amravati in—say the twelfth century. Altogether nothing would surprise me less than to find that the Tooth relic sojourned here for seventy-six years before its recovery by the Ceylonese, about 1314 of our era. The materials exist for settling this question, but they have not yet been made available.

§ Cunningham, Bhilsa Topes, p. 264.

|| J. B. B. R. A. S., vol. V. p. 39, et seq.

doubt his correctness in this respect, this evidence, "valeat quantum," would assign to the Amravati Tope the same epoch.

The evidence derived from the architecture of these Caves confirms this attribution to the fullest possible extent. Two drawings have already been given (Woodcuts 11. and 12.), and more will appear in the sequel, but meanwhile, if I am correct in ascribing the Nasick Cave to Gotamiputra (A.D. 309) and the Kenheri Cave to the age of Buddhaghosa (A.D. 410), this evidence, as far as it goes, would fix the erection of the great Rail at Amravati within the limits of the fourth century.

A good deal has yet to be accomplished before this branch of the investigation can be said to be complete; but everything that has yet been brought to light tends to confirm the assumption that the extreme elaboration of ornament which placed sculptured discs on the intermediate bars, as well as on the pillars of Buddhist Rails, was not introduced before the third century, and every building where it is found must consequently be dated subsequent to the year 200 at the earliest. In so far, therefore, as either paleographic or architectural evidence is concerned, the great Rail belongs to the fourth century. The central building, as will afterwards appear, is older, and the inner Rail more modern.

Notwithstanding all this, there is so much of Greek or rather Bactrian art in the architectural details of the Amravati Tope, that the first inference is that it must be nearer to the Christian era than the form of the inscriptions would lead us to suppose. On the other hand, we do not know how long the classical influence prevailed, and how much it may have been nourished by intercommunication with the West. Down to the age of Constantine, Rome seems to have maintained its intercourse with India, and we must pause before we draw a line as to the time when classical feeling may have ceased to exert an influence on Indian art. Certainly, in this instance, the expression of Hiouen Thsang, that this Tope was ornamented with all the art of the palaces of Bactria, is borne out to the fullest extent; but there seems no reason to suppose that this classical influence may not have endured till the break down of the Roman Empire in the fourth and fifth centuries, though it could hardly have lasted beyond that time.

The one point which it seems necessary to insist upon at this stage of the inquiry is the strong Bactrian influence which is manifested in all the details of the monument. As has been explained, the sculptures, with scarcely an exception, refer to a Naga people and to a Naga worship; and since, as pointed out above, p. 44, Taxila and Cashmere were the head quarters of that faith at this age, that circumstance alone would almost suffice to indicate the north-west as the source from which we must expect information regarding its origin. But, again, how long did the Bactro-Parthian kingdom exist? and how long did it continue to influence the politics and arts of India Proper? These are questions to which no very definite answer can be given in the present state of our knowledge; my own impression is, that the influence continued to a much later date than has hitherto generally been supposed; but there is nothing in all this sufficiently definite to enable us to found on it any argument as to the date of the Amravati Tope.

Although, therefore, it must be confessed that neither these classical influences nor the Mackenzie traditions seem to throw any steady light on our subject, the

information collected by Mr. Stirling, and published in his invaluable history of Cuttack, does seem to bear on its origin.

The following extracts from his memoirs* are those which seem most to the point:—"In the reign of Bajra Nath Deo the Yavanas are said to invade the country in great numbers from Babul Des—explained to mean Iran and Cabul—but are finally driven back." "In the reign of Huns or Hangsha Deo (query, Hushka) the Yavanas again invade in great force from Cashmere, and many bloody battles ensue." In the reign of Bhoja, the Yavanas from Sindhu Des invade the country in great force, but are driven back. Then follows Vikramāditya. If, therefore, the dates are to be depended upon, these invasions took place before the Christian era. Other Yavana invasions occur in the next four reigns; but the most important of all occurred in the reign of Subhan Deo, who ascended the throne 318 (the year of the Ballabhi era). In the ninth year of his reign a Yavana, Rakta Bāhu, invades the country by sea, and conquers it. The king escapes with the image of Juggernath, which he buries under a ber tree, and flies farther into the jungle, where he dies. His son succeeds to the title, but is murdered by the invaders. "A Yavana dynasty then ruled over Orissa for a space of 146 years, or down to A.D. 473." If these dates are to be depended upon,—and I see no reason for doubting their general correctness,—the period of the supremacy of this Yavana dynasty in Orissa exactly coincides with the dates which from other circumstances I would ascribe to the principal buildings at Amravati. No Stirling has yet visited Guntur, and we cannot therefore assert it, but it seems more than probable that the foreigners who conquered the northern, would also take possession of the southern Kalingas.

This account of this last invasion, being derived from Brahminical sources, would hardly help us much; but, fortunately, we have two Buddhist accounts of the same transaction, which are much more complete and detailed, and which do, I fancy, throw great light on our researches. The first is contained in the Daladā-vansa, partially translated by the Hon. G. Turnour, and published in the J. A. S. B. vol. VI. p. 856, et seq.; the other is abstracted by Colonel Low from the Siamese Phrā Pat'hom, and published in the same journal, vol. XVII. part II. p. 82, et seq. Unfortunately, neither work has been completely translated, and the extracts having been made with reference to other objects, do not give us all the information we want. The following abridgment of the story will, however, suffice for present purposes:—

The left canine tooth of Buddha had been preserved in Dantapura, the capital of Kalinga, probably at or near the spot where the celebrated temple of Juggernāth now stands, for 800 years, when Gāhasīvo, the king, early in the fourth century, was converted to Buddhism from the Brahminical faith, which he had professed up to that time. With the zeal of a convert he dismissed and persecuted the Brahmins, who had hitherto enjoyed his favour. They repaired to Pātaliputta (Patna) to complain of this to the paramount sovereign, here called Pāṇḍu, but who, as it appears from the context, most probably was the Gotamiputra of the Sātkaṇi

* Asiatic Researches, vol. XV. p. 254, et seq. J. A. S. B., vol. VI. p. 756, et seq.

dynasty. He orders Gûhasîvo to repair to his court, bringing the relic with him. It is then subjected to every sort of trial. It is smashed on an anvil, thrown into the gutter, and everything conceivable done to destroy or dishonour it. It comes triumphantly out of all its trials. The king is converted, and finally devotes himself to a religious life.

While all this is going on, a northern king—it is not quite clear whence he came*—named Khîrâdhâro, attacks the capital, in order to possess himself of the wonder-working relic. He was defeated and killed in battle, and Gûhasîvo returned, it is said, with the sacred tooth to his capital. Some time afterwards the nephews of Khîrâdhâro, allying themselves with other kings, march against Gûhasîvo. He, though seeing that resistance is hopeless, prepares for defence; but, before going to the combat, he enjoins on his daughter Hemachalâ, who was married to a prince of Oujein, called Danta Kumâra, that in the event of his falling, they should take the relic, and escaping by sea, convey it to Mahâsena, king of Ceylon, who had been for some time negotiating for its purchase.†

The prince and princess fly from the city before its fall, bury the relic in the sand, in the same manner as the image of Juggernath is said to have been concealed in the Brahminical account, and, afterwards returning, the princess conceals it in her hair, and escaping to the coast, they take ship apparently at Tamralipi or Tamlook, and sail for Ceylon. Half-way between the place of embarkation and Ceylon they are shipwrecked, at a place called the Diamond Sands.‡ From the context I do not think there can be much hesitation in fixing this locality on the banks of the

* Probably Śrāvastî, then the capital of the northern Kôsala, the modern Oude. See General Cunningham's Report for 1862-63, p. 40.

† Some years ago Dr. Bird opened a small Tope in front of the Kenheri Caves in Salsette. In it he found a copper plate recording that a canine tooth of Buddha had been deposited there. The plate is dated in the year 245. From the expression "Samvat" being used, Dr. Stevenson (J. B. B. R. A. S., vol. V. p. 13) assumes that it must be from the era of Vikramâditya. I believe, however, it is correct to assert that no Buddhist inscription is dated from the era of the hated opponent of their religion. If, on the other hand, we assume the era of Śâlivâhana, it brings the date to almost the exact time—A.D. 323—of these events on the east coast; and though it is not directly stated in the inscription, it seems that the tooth was deposited there by Gotamiputra, the very king who played so important a part in the narrative just recorded, and what is more, it seems extremely probable that the Kenheri tooth was, or was supposed to be, the identical one which performed so many miracles in Pâṭaliputta.

This might seem paradoxical had not the same thing happened to the same relic in similar circumstances more than twelve centuries afterwards. When the Portuguese conquered Ceylon, Constantine de Braganza seized the Daladâ and conveyed it to Goa. The king of Pegu sent an embassy after it, and offered any amount of ransom for it. But the bigotry of the priesthood was proof against any such temptation. The tooth was consumed by fire in presence of the Archbishop and all the notables, and the ashes cast into the sea. The result was peculiar. The Ceylonese pretended that the one so destroyed was a counterfeit. A true one was discovered and sold to the king of Pegu, and as soon as he was gone and had paid for it, another true one was found concealed in Ceylon, and is probably the crocodile's tooth that is now so honoured in that country. To complete the parallelism, both the Burmese and the Concani teeth have disappeared, and only their empty Chaityas remain. The Ceylonese tooth still remains with the oldest pedigree of any such relic that the world possesses.

The particulars of this second great attempt to destroy the Daladâ will be found well stated in Sir E. Tennent's Ceylon, vol. II. p. 199. Translations of the original authorities are there given also.

‡ *Dimne* means sand bank in Telugu. This may be the origin of the name Dîpal dimne, which certainly does not mean "Hill of Lights." Can Dîpal, by any synonym, be assumed to mean diamond?

Kistnah. First, from its position half-way;* next, because here only, so far as I know, are those diamond† mines near the coast; but more because, as will be abundantly proved by the sequel, it was the residence of the Naga Raja.

The Naga Raja steals the relic from the princess when she is asleep, but he is forced by the power of a Thero, from the Himalaya, to restore it, and the wanderers again embark, and after various adventures reach Ceylon in the year 312.‡ Mahāsena had been dead nine years, but the fugitives are received with open arms by Meghavarna,§ the reigning sovereign; a brick and mortar Chaitya is made, and the relic brought by the prince and princess enshrined with great solemnity (Colonel Low, p. 86).

The narrative then proceeds:—"Three years had passed away, when the king of Lankā perceived from an ancient prophecy that in seven years from that date a certain king, Dhammāsoka Raja, would erect a temple on the Diamond Sands; and he likewise recollected that there were two Donas of relics of Buddha still concealed in the country of Naga Raja. He therefore directed a holy person to go and bring these relics." The Naga Raja's brother swallows the relics, and flies to Meru, but they are taken from him and brought back. "Soon after this Naga Raja arrived (in Ceylon), in the form of a handsome youth, and solicited a few relics from his majesty, which were bestowed upon him accordingly."

His majesty now ordered a golden ship to be made. It was one cubit long and one span broad. The relics were put into a golden cup; this was placed in a vase, and the whole put into the golden ship. A wooden ship was next built, having a breadth of beam of seven long cubits.

Danta Kumāra and Hemachalā being desirous of revisiting their country, the king of Lankā sent with them ambassadors to one of the five|| kings who now ruled there, requesting him to show them every attention. The vessel reached the Diamond Sands in five months, and the prince and princess went on shore, accompanied by the priests. An account is then given of the building of the temple, and the mode in which the relics were placed. The vessel now set sail for Dantapura, which it reached in little more than three months. The ambassadors of the king of Lankā landed with the prince and princess. They were treated with much distinction, and remained in the country.

* The Siamese, as Colonel Low points out, wishing to make their own country the scene of these events, have lengthened the periods of the voyage preposterously. They make it three months from Cuttack to the Diamond Sands, and three more from thence to Ceylon.—J. A. S. B., vol. XVII. pt. II., pages 86 and 87.

† One of the objects of Colonel Mackenzie's surveys was to mark the diamond mines in the locality. He plots the diamond district as extending to about eight miles north of Amravati, but it seems there are no mines elsewhere. Their position is marked on the map, Plate XLVI.

‡ It does not seem quite clear how far the Ceylonese dates are to be relied upon as quite correct about this time. Avowedly there is an error to the extent of at least sixty years in the date their annals assign to Asoka. This has subsequently been adjusted, to some extent, by Mr. Turnour, but not, so far as I can judge, in such a manner as to inspire entire confidence. My impression is that the dates in the fourth century are all from ten to fifteen years too early.

§ Is not this the Varāja of the Western Cave Inscript.?—J. B. B. R. A. S., vol. V. p. 42.

|| Those who, according to the Daladāvansa, had combined with the nephews of Khirādhāro and conquered the country.

After this follows a third tradition which Colonel Low treats as if referring to another king and to different circumstances, but both from the name he bore and the whole of the circumstances mentioned in the context seems undoubtedly to have been the same person. In the legend he is called Dhammāsoka* and ruled the country of Arvadi, apparently Avanti (Ougein) with strict justice, but is forced by a famine to emigrate with his followers, amounting to 31,000 able-bodied men. The wanderers proceeded southward for seven months. After various adventures they reach a place where water and fish were abundant. Next day the king mounted his horse and reached the Diamond Sands. Here he meets the Naga Raja, builds a Chaitya, and founds a city.

“Dhammāsoka reigned here quietly for seven years, but mortified and unhappy because he could not reach the relics. His Majesty accordingly offered a high reward to any one who should find the relics and disinhume them. But this proved of no avail. It so happened that, in the dilemma, a Putra or son of the king of Róm or Roum, named Kākabhāsa, who happened to be trading to the country of Takhasilā, encountered a violent storm. He had 500 souls on board, who, supplicating the gods, were rescued from death. The ship, with much difficulty, reached close to the Diamond Sands, and observing signs of population cast anchor with a view to refit.”

The Prince of Róm† assists the Naga Raja to recover the hidden treasure, and to build a wonderful nine-storied Chaitya over it, many particulars of which are given; but as they are too long to extract, and either are imaginary or do not refer to the particular building we are engaged upon, it is hardly necessary to quote them here. These quotations might be multiplied to almost any extent; but enough has probably been adduced to show that, in the beginning of the fourth century—about the time when the struggle for the tooth relic was convulsing all India—Buddhist tradition points most distinctly to the Diamond Sands, on the banks of the Kistnah, as the place where a great temple was being built. The kingdom of the Naga Raja certainly was there; and so far as can be judged from every indication as to the locality, if it was not at or near Amravati, it could not possibly have been far from the spot.

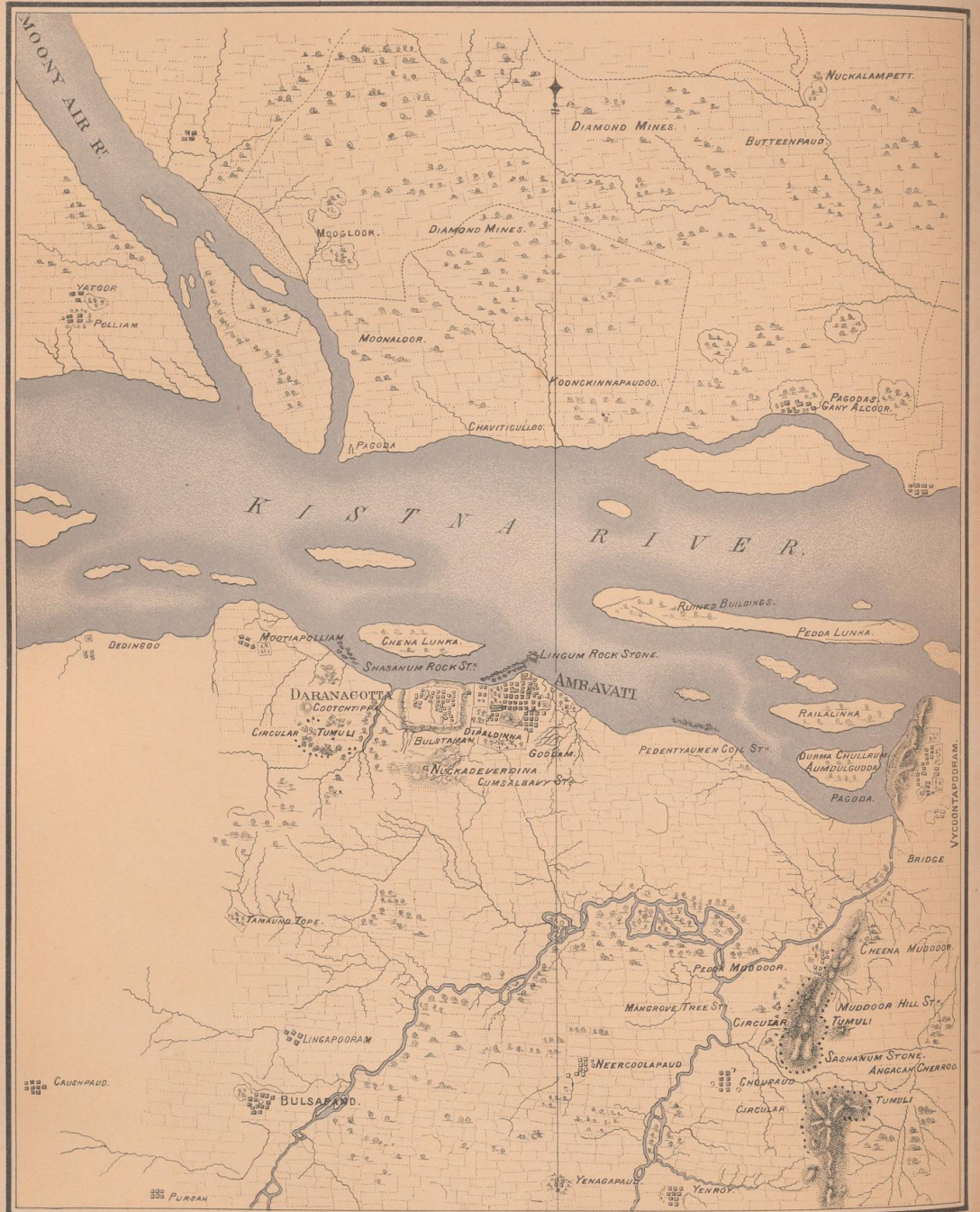
Though all this tends to confirm the idea that the building referred to is the Amravati Tope, the inference rises almost to certainty when we come to examine the sculptures with which it is adorned. In one bas-relief a ship is represented with

* This is evidently a title, though from the similarity of the name Colonel Low confounds him with the great Aśoka, and places him 321 B.C.

† It would be absurd to found any serious theory on the mention of the name of Rome, if it stood alone and unsupported. The circumstance mentioned in the narrative of the strangers being white men, and coming by sea, is a small confirmation that the people here mentioned were really Europeans. My impression, however, is that few who are familiar with the arts of Rome in Constantine's time, and who will take the trouble to master these Amravati sculptures, can fail to perceive many points of affinity between them. The circular medallions of the arch of Constantine—such as belong to his time—and the general tone of the art of his age so closely resemble what we find here, that the coincidence can hardly be accidental. The conviction that the study of these sculptures has forced in my mind is, that there was much more intercommunication between the east and west during the whole period from Alexander to Justinian than is generally supposed, and that the intercourse was especially frequent and influential in the middle period, between Augustus and Constantine.

two persons on board, bearing relics, and is being welcomed by a Naga king on approaching the shore. In another an ark, in the form of a ship, like that described above, is being borne in state on men's shoulders; and in numerous scenes there are conferences between the Naga king and a prince or king accompanied by a lady, neither of whom nor any of whose suite are Nagas. Of course these may represent other similar scenes which have happened to other people; but a careful examination of the whole presents so many points of coincidence that I hardly think they can be accidental. One point which the sculptures undoubtedly reveal is that Amravati was the capital, or, at least, the residence of the Naga Raja. In all the sculptures which do not relate to the life of Buddha, and in many of these, the Naga king appears with his hood of a seven-headed snake, and all his women have also single snakes at the back of their heads. As will be presently shown, Naga worship almost supersedes Buddhism in the religious representations, so much so, indeed, that it is sometimes difficult to say to which religion the temple is dedicated.

It may be quite true that no single part of this evidence is sufficient to prove the case, but, taking the whole of it together, I think it must be admitted to be sufficient to justify the presumption that the beginning of the fourth century was the great building epoch at Amravati. When all the evidence about to be advanced in describing the Plates is added to what has been adduced, few, I fancy, will be inclined to doubt but that the two great Rails at Amravati are part of the Temple at the Diamond Sands, which, according to the Ceylonese computation, was commenced in the year 322. Judging from the elaboration of the outer Rail, it may have taken fifty years to complete. If this be so, the date of its completion may be about the year 370 or 380 of our era, and the principal part of the building may thus have remained complete for 150 or 200 years after that time, before it was deserted, as mentioned by Hiouen Thsang. From evidence which will be brought forward hereafter, it would appear that the central building or Tope itself is at least a century older than the great Rail, and that the inner or smaller Rail is at least as much more modern, so that, like our own cathedrals, the erection of this Tope may have lasted for two or three centuries, or say from 200 to 500 A.D. Even beyond this, however, there are reasons for believing—as will be shown in describing Plate LXXXIII.—that a building of importance existed here as early as the Christian era, or contemporaneously with the gates at Sanchi. On the other hand, we know for certain that it was afterwards repaired and used for Buddhist purposes as late as the twelfth or thirteenth centuries; but the particulars of this restoration are less interesting, and further explorations on the spot are necessary before they can be made intelligible. All this, however, will be clearer and more easily intelligible when we have gone through the description of the 54 Plates, which are devoted to the illustration of the architecture and sculptures of the Amravati Tope.



W. GRIGGS LITH.

INDIA MUSEUM

MAP OF AMRAVATI IN GUNTOOR
 & OF PURTYALL & THE DIAMOND MINES
 WITH THE VILLAGES ADJACENT REDUCED FROM THE ORIGINAL SURVEY.
 IN 1816.
 SCALE OF 1 MILE TO AN INCH.

VYCUONTA PDDRAM.

B

PLAN AND SECTION
of the
TOPE AT AMRAYATI.

From a Survey made by
COL. MACKENZIE
in 1817.

