

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## 1. ARCHITECTURE IN INDIA.

*Camp, Rohe-Ashtami, Kolaba District,  
Bombay Presidency, 18 Feb., 1888.*

SIR,—I have read with great interest Mr. Simpson's suggestions as to the origin of certain forms in Indian Architecture (JOURNAL, Vol. XX. Part I. pp. 49 *et seq.*), and hope that the following rough notes may be of some use in confirming his valuable conjectures.

The origin of the Chaitya form of roof may now be considered, I think, as proven by his deductions from the works of Col. Marshall and Mr. Breeks; and reduce Mr. Ferguson's remarks about the probable result of exploration by "a man with an eye in his head" to a prophecy.

It is worth noting that somewhat similar wooden forms appear to have been similarly adapted to rock-cut architecture in ancient Lycia; but there we have not, as in the Nilgiris, got the almost primitive hut still extant in striking resemblance to the rock-hewn monument.

As regards the connection of Hindu temples with tombs, it still exists over a great part of Western India. Throughout the Deccan and Konkan, when an ascetic of unusual sanctity is buried, instead of being burnt (as is common), a small monument is apt to be raised over his grave, and this will generally take the form of a model temple shrine, containing, if he was a Saiva, a lingam in a "*shalunkha*," or in

some cases the "padam" (two feet in low relief), more rarely other sacred emblems or even images.

The erection of such monuments over the site of a cremation is more rare, and is, I have been told, not strictly orthodox; but I have known several cases. One of the most famous is the so-called "tomb" of Raja Sivaji, on the hill-fortress of Raigarh in this district, which was surveyed and repaired under my own direction two years ago, by order and at the expense of Government.

I know another said to commemorate the cremation of one of the Angira sea-kings, and to have been erected by himself before his death, just as a Musalmán chief erects his own tomb. As often happens, the work remained unfinished by his successors, but he is said to have been burnt close to the spot, which is sacred; forming part of the "curtilage" of a group of temples. I should have said that Raja Sivaji's cenotaph is close to a temple erected by himself. Another similar cenotaph marks the place where a Brahmin lady became "sati" in 1818, near Brahman Wáde in Ahmadnagar; and at Chinchwad, in Poona, the founder of a still existing line of Avatars of Ganpati is said to have been interred *alive* inside the principal temple. This is a large building; and, indeed, wherever the survivors were wealthy and pious, such buildings are usually not distinguishable at a glance from ordinary temples of the smaller temples of any important group, and they go in conversation by the same name "dewal."

The above are modern instances, but throughout the same region we find old monolithic sepulchral monuments of small size, generally from 2ft. 6in. to 4ft. high. Their purpose is often indicated by their position in unmistakeable cemeteries still in use, or where abandoned, still crowded with unmistakeable grave mounds, and recorded to be ancient cemeteries. In many cases these have only been abandoned under pressure of authority, which in that country has of late years set its face against intramural burial, and appointed new cemeteries and burying-grounds at some distance from the dwellings of men, for sanitary reasons.

Further, their sculptures commonly represent the death of the deceased, his judgment before Yama, and his final appearance in heaven, where he worships the lingam or otherwise, according to his creed on earth.

Such sculptures are almost always enclosed in a sort of frame, representing a section of a temple, just as in Europe. A mural tablet or relief would perhaps be framed in a "pediment" borrowed from classic religious art. And very commonly the whole stone is itself a model of a temple, usually of Dravidian form. I have, I think, said enough to show the close connection between temples and the tombs and cenotaphs which often cluster around them in this region, both ancient and modern, and have only to add that it seems to be closest and commonest in Saiva remains. The whole of the facts correspond with Mr. Simpson's observations and quotations on pp. 56, 57 of his article. I am not prepared, however, to draw any positive deduction as to whether the tomb sprang from the temple or the temple from the tomb; though, looking at the almost universal ancestor-worship in one form or another, the latter appears the more likely hypothesis.

Again, taking Mr. Simpson's remarks about the cars or raths of the gods, I am able to say that several exist (or lately did) in Western India, which are by no means temporary structures, nor dismantled after each procession, though for it they may be "dressed" (like a ship in gala trim) with additional ornaments. And these are usually wooden representations of Sikra-spires. Mr. Fergusson mentions and figures one at Vijayanagar (*Ind. and East. Architecture*, p. 375), which is monolithic and fixed, but has moveable wheels. Very likely the turning of these was part of the performance on feast days.

In Khandesh and parts of Central India, when I served there a good many years ago, there were private bullock carriages, covered, not indeed with bamboo, but with a high roof of wooden lattice applied just as bamboo would be, and very probably derived from a bamboo original. This was supported on four corner posts, and if this structure had been

used in a god's car, or in a fixed shrine, it could easily be imagined to develop into a sort of sikra.

The "āmālaka," however, appears to have a somewhat different origin. As Mr. Fergusson justly observes, the fruit of *Phyllanthus emblica* is too insignificant a berry to be looked to as the origin of an important architectural form. Moreover, when fresh, it has not the least resemblance to the "āmālaka" of a temple, and though it is a little more like one in shape when dried, the comparison is still a strained one.

But there seems to be a pretty clear indication in the position of the āmalaka, which supports the Kalas. Now the kalas is professedly a pot, and to this day common earthen pots are used as finials of rude structures, such as scarecrows, or even of more solid erections, very often, for instance, on gate-posts. And the round-bottomed Indian pot, on a human head, or in any other position, is generally supported upon an annular cushion or wreath made of rags, grass, or any coarse fibre, "stoppered," as a sailor would say, with twine. The "stoppering" of course produces corrugations in the softer fibre of the wreath, and the whole of this 'rest' for the water-pot is, in the district where I write, called "chumbal."<sup>1</sup>

Now if any one will build up a something to represent a sikhara, and try to cap it with a "kalas" or round-bottomed pot, he will find that he must either invert the pot or set it upon something that will act as a "chumbal," or it won't be secure. But using a 'grummet' or coil of rope, he will find the kalas sit steady, and harmonize artistically with his chumbal. And if, as Mr. Simpson shows good ground for supposing, a part of the spire was devoted to the custody of relics, they must be put in some suitable receptacle, and the first receptacle that a Hindu thinks of for any small article, fluid or solid, is a round-bottomed pot—the very kalas that we have been talking of.

I admit the full possibility of the āmalaka being an

<sup>1</sup> Pāli cumbaṭa.—Ed.

umbrella; but, looking at the fact that people do not put water-pots over umbrellas in any known country, while they do put them over "chumbals" throughout India (and in other countries wherever the pots are round-bottomed), I think that the explanation suggested above has more chance of being the right one.

In a matter so unsusceptible of proof, however, I cannot put it forward as more than a likely suggestion.

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