

## CORRESPONDENCE.

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### 1. THE PILLARS OF THE THUPĀRĀMA AND LANKĀRĀMA DĀGABAS, CEYLON.

DEAR PROFESSOR RHYS DAVIDS,—The concentric pillars which surround the Thupārāma and Lankārāma dāgabas at Anurādhapura, the ancient capital of Ceylon, have long been a puzzle to the archæologist. These pillars are tall and slender; the Thupārāma dāgaba has four concentric circles of them, and the Lankārāma has three. The first guess as to their purpose—and a very natural one—was that they had supported some kind of a roof to protect the pasadas, or procession paths, from the sun. Fergusson, with his wide knowledge of Buddhist architecture, conjectured that these pillars were only another and a developed form of the posts which form the pradakshina, or procession path, of the Sanchi and other stūpas. To this he added the further suggestion that, as sculpture had not been developed in Ceylon to the same extent as painting, pictures on cloth or canvas of some kind had been hung upon them with scenes representing the life of Buddha. The hanging of lights, or garlands of flowers, was another possible theory in keeping with Buddhist practices. The difficulty up to the present has been to know which of all these guesses might be the correct one.

The Ceylon Government has lately published a very large and important work on the "Architectural Remains of Anurādhapura," by Mr. J. G. Smithers, F.R.I.B.A.,

late Architect to the Government of Ceylon. The book is almost wholly devoted to the *dāgabas* of the old capital, and it contains no less than sixty-seven large plates, which, from their size, appear to give an exhaustive account of the details of the old monuments. Mr. Smithers, as a practical architect, rejects the supposition that the slim pillars of the two *dāgabas* could possibly have supported any kind of roof; but he makes the suggestion that they may have been surmounted by Buddhist emblems. On reading this it recalled to my mind that the pillars known as “Buddhist *lāts*” were, as their name implies, long and slender, and they were all surmounted by emblematic objects, such as lions, elephants, or wheels. There is a pillar still standing in front of the Karli cave, with four lions on the summit, and Fergusson supposes that above these there was originally a *chakra*, or wheel. Hiuen Tsiang supplies an additional evidence. In describing Ceylon this pilgrim says: “By the side of the king’s palace is the *vihāra* of Buddha’s tooth, several hundred feet high, brilliant with jewels, and ornamented with rare gems. Above the *vihāra* is placed an upright pole, on which is fixed a great Padma *rāja* [*ruby*] jewel.”<sup>1</sup> This was at the Thupārāma *dāgaba*, where the position of the tooth temple, which was then at that place, may be seen on Mr. Smithers’ plan, and here we have a pole, or pillar, surmounted by a Buddhist emblem. The slender form of the pillars at the Thupārāma *dāgaba* show that they are only copies of poles or wooden originals. The word “*lāt*,” which is applied to the Buddhist pillars in India, indicates the same character.

Perhaps the best evidence for this theory of the pillars may be derived from a late *Progress Report* by Dr. Führer, which recounts an archæological survey he has made in Burma. In writing of the Sandō Payā, the largest pagoda in Prome, he states that the platform on which it is constructed is paved with stone slabs, “and all round its outer edge is a continuous series of carved wooden image-houses,

<sup>1</sup> Beal’s translation, vol. ii, p. 248.

and between these and the pagoda are *garuntaings*, or sacred posts, surmounted by *garuda*, with long streamers dependent from their summits." The word "pagoda" in Burma means a similar structure to the *stūpa* of India, and the *dāgaba* of Ceylon, and here we have it surrounded with "sacred posts," which support a figure of Garuda, the Wahan of Vishnu. It is understood that up to the fifth century Burma derived its faith and an architectural influence from India; but after that date it looked also to Ceylon, and this would explain where the models for the *Garuntaings* had been found. Why the Buddhists of Burma had chosen the *Garuda* of Vishnu is not explained; but that is of no moment here, the point being that the posts are surmounted by emblematical figures.

Columns, with emblems upon them, at temples were not confined to the Buddhists; the Brahmins had them at their temples as well. At the rock-cut *kailasa* of Ellura there are two columns, and on the top of one there is still the fragment of a *trisula* which surmounted it. At the well-known temple of Jagannātha at Puri there is a pillar called the *Aruna Stambha*; it stood originally before the Sun temple at Konārak, and bore a monkey on its summit. There were others in Orissa, and one still stands at Jagepur (see illustration in Fergusson's "Indian and Eastern Architecture," p. 433) which supported a "garuda," the same fabulous creature that is borne on the "sacred posts" at Prome.

The following by Dr. Bühler, if correct, seems still further to confirm this. Dr. Führer had discovered some very interesting Jaina sculptures in the *Kankāli Tila* at Mathurā; among the objects represented on the sculptures were *stūpas*—showing that the Jainas also erected monuments of that character—and regarding these Dr. Bühler writes: "With respect to the *stūpa*, which we shall meet again more than once in the other plates, I repeat that it is a form of the funeral monument once used and worshipped by all Indian sects that followed the *Jñāna* and *Bhakti Mārgas*, and I refer for some of the reasons for this theory

to my article *Vienna Or. Journal*, vol. iv, pp. 328 f. I may add, however, that Brahminical Chaityas are occasionally mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*. Thus we read (*Mah.* i, 109, 13, 14): 'That country, O king, protected on all sides by Bhishma, in accordance with the sacred law, became lovely, being adorned with hundreds of *chaityas* and sacrificial posts.' The juxtaposition of the *chaityas* and *yūpas* shows that Brahminical sacred buildings, probably *stūpas*, were meant."<sup>1</sup> This quotation from the *Mahābhārata*, if Dr. Bühler be correct in his interpretation of it, although slight enough, would pass for a description of the Thupārāma and the Lankārāma *dāgabas*; but it will be rather a surprise if it turns out that the pillars at these *dāgabas* had their origin in the *yūpas*, or sacrificial posts, to which the victims were tied at an early period, when, as we know, the sacrifice of animals was a part of the Brahminical system.

W. SIMPSON.

## 2. KURANḌA.

SIR,—In *Jātaka*, No. 172 of Mr. Rouse's translation, there is a remarkable passage which appears to be the result of a mistake in Childers' Dictionary: it is as follows:—

Page 46. "The yellow robe which he put on was blue as a bluebell."

If the colour of the robe was really blue, the word "kāsāva" had better not have been translated "yellow robe," but "robe."

However, on turning up "kaṇṭa-kuraṇḍa" in Roxburgh Flor. Ind., vol. iii, p. 37, I find that the *thorny* kuraṇḍa has a yellow flower. Childers gives "*Barleria cristata*," which is not thorny and has a blue flower, whereas the proper name is "*Barleria prionitis*."—Yours truly,

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<sup>1</sup> *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. ii, p. 313.