

CORRESPONDENCE.

NOTE ON ANCIENT REMAINS OF TEMPLES ON THE BANNU FRONTIER. Communicated by Lala Hira Lal.

SIR,—Lala Hira Lal, a member of the Royal Asiatic Society, has communicated to me the following details of some old Temples in an unfrequented part of the Panjab frontier. In Edwardesabad, or Bannu, a little below Attock, is the small town of Kâlâbâgh, on the very bank of the Indus. The river is here not more than 400 feet broad, as it is confined between high banks on both sides. Just opposite to Kâlâbâgh is the small village of Mârî, the path from the river bank leading to which winds round the base of a hillock about 200 feet high. The hillock is called by the villagers Arjan Nângâ, and upon mounting this the remains of two Temples are reached. The villagers state that, after the Kerwâs had defeated the Pândwâs, the latter retired to this hill in order to spend their twelve years of banishment in seclusion. Their exile is supposed to have been passed on the spot marked by these Temples. A little higher up there are the remains of a third utterly ruined Temple, built of bricks of light porous clay, about one foot long, nine inches wide, and three inches thick. The villagers informed Hira Lal that the bricks of this ruin were made of leaves; and this statement induced him to break a few of the bricks. To his astonishment he found them all distinctly marked inside with the impressions of the leaves of trees. Several specimens of these broken bricks have been forwarded to me, and the veining of the laurel-like leaves is certainly very distinct upon them.

The presence of a petrifying spring at no great distance renders it probable that these bricks are made of clayey soil mixed with leaves, which has been under the influence of this spring of water. It seems, however, that no use is now made of this material in building. A large number of quartzose crystals are scattered over the hill and imbedded in the stones. These, it is asserted, are due to the curse of a Faqir, who turned into useless crystals all the precious gems of which the hill was originally composed. The two Temples first spoken of are believed by the villagers to be five thousand years old; and they are undoubtedly of great antiquity. Their fronts appear to have been repaired in modern times. Lala Hira Lal is, unfortunately, not an artist; but he has supplied rough sketches which show that these are remains of Buddhist Temples of the tall, or conical, kind; but whether of the straight or bulged species it is impossible to say. The Buddhistic character of these remains is made certain by the eight-leafed lotus ornaments, which Hira Lal represents as the characteristic carving of the Temples. It is worth notice that the villagers of the neighbourhood of this hill use small stone bottles for ink, etc., which closely resemble small stûpas. They are *eight*-sided, just like ordinary Buddhistic pillars; and the zig-zag markings on each face also consist of *eight* points; while the edges of the faces are notched into *eight* divisions. Round the dome-like tops of these little stûpas are sets of *eight*-pointed zig-zags, and there are also notches arranged in sets of *eight*. It is, at least, remarkable that obscure villagers should be traditionally manufacturing these little stone objects so suggestive of a Buddhistic origin, marked all over with the mystic number *eight*, in contiguity to the remains of old Buddhistic Temples.

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