

Dr Wilson

with the kindest regards &

best wishes of the author

Edwin

4 June 1855

N O T E S

ON SOME OF THE

BUDDHIST OPINIONS AND MONUMENTS OF ASIA,

COMPARED WITH THE SYMBOLS ON THE

ANCIENT SCULPTURED "STANDING STONES" OF SCOTLAND.

BY

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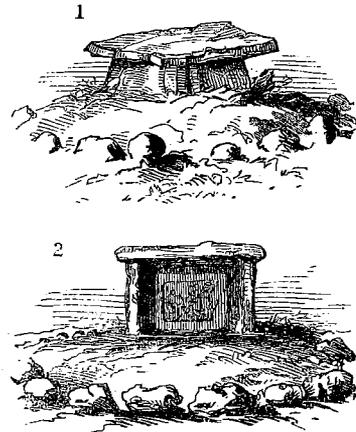
XVI.—Notes on some of the Buddhist Opinions and Monuments of Asia, compared with the Symbols on the Ancient Sculptured “Standing Stones” of Scotland.
By THOMAS A. WISE, M.D., F.R.S.E. (With a Plate).

(Read 2d January 1855.)

The general identity, in idea and design, of the ancient monuments of Southern and Western Europe, with those of Hindostan, is so marked, as to appear to justify the inference that races of Asiatics proceeded westward at different ages, and established themselves along the shores of the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas, and part of the Atlantic Ocean; along which route they have left characteristic monuments, which resemble those of their original country.* The ancient monuments common to these distant regions are—

1. *Cairns and Barrows.* These monuments, common to Celtic Europe and India, are mounds of earth, or piles of stones. One near Hidrabad, in Central India, was surrounded by a circle of stones, which exactly resembled those round cairns in Europe.

2. *Cromlechs and Kist-vaens,* consisting of two or more upright stones, which, as props, support a horizontal block or slab, forming a chamber underneath. Such monuments are pretty numerous in wild and retired places in the peninsula of India (fig. 1), and contain a sarcophagus, with the bones of the dead.† In others, urns are found, of red or black pottery, containing the ashes of the bodies which had been purified by their passage through fire. These monuments were usually paved with a large slab, and have a circular hole‡ in one of the upright slabs which formed the walls, to allow the passage of the soul, which was supposed to linger for a time near the remains of the body after death. These cromlechs were in some cases varied in their shape, and



* These eastern races appear to have proceeded westward by Scythia and Scandinavia, on the one hand (WORSAAE, *Primeval Antiquities of Denmark*, edited by Mr THOMS, p. 132 *et seq.*); and by the shores of the Mediterranean, on the other. Hence, we find the same cromlechs and cinctures of pillar-stones on the mountains of Circassia, and the undulating plains of Tartary (DENNIS's *Etruria*, vol. ii., p. 321); Asia Minor (IRBY and MANGLES's *Travels*, ch. vi.: Colonial Libr. Edit., p. 99); Tunis, in Africa (DENNIS, *l. c.*); Etruria and Sardinia (DENNIS, *ibid.*); the Atlantic shores of Spain (BORROW's *Bible in Spain*, ch. vii.); of Gaul (*Histoire des Peuples Britons*, par COURSON); and the greater part of the British Islands.

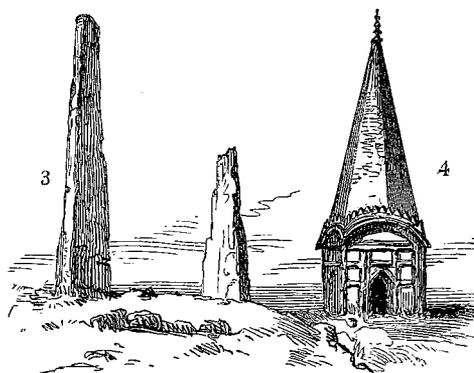
† Colonel MACKENZIE sometimes found in these cromlechs urns, arms, and even coins. See MARIA GRAHAM's *Journal*, p. 168.

‡ See Letter by Capt. NEWBOLT, Asiatic Society, 17th July 1846.

the slabs were dressed. In one found near Rodroog (fig. 2), by the late Col. Mackenzie, Surveyor-General of India, there was an attempt at sculpture; proving a certain advance in ornamental art. Sometimes they were surrounded by circles of stones.

3. *Obelisks*, or as they are frequently called, *Standing Stones*. Such large tapering, erect stones, or obelisks, are found in all Celtic countries, and resemble topes or solid cairns in Buddhist countries; one kind being funereal, erected over the grave of an individual; another, memorial, to commemorate some event; and a third being dedicated to the Deity. In general, such stones are placed over the dead in the Celtic countries of Europe, and are likewise found in Central India, as well as in Bengal and its neighbourhood. The

drawing (fig. 3) represents such stones, as found in Central India by Col. Mackenzie. What renders this monument interesting is, that it appears to have formed part of a cairn similar to that mentioned above, which was surrounded by a circle of stones. In many parts of India, however, such large blocks of stone are not to be procured; and pyramidal structures, spires, or "*mut*s" (fig. 4),



evidently modifications, under the pressure of circumstances, of the original monolithical erection, were had recourse to. These are still erected by Hindus. They are sometimes cenotaphs, at other times mausoleums. In the former case, the wealthy erect these buildings as memorials of the dead; and in the latter, over the ashes of their relations, or over a bone of their body, after it has been purified by fire, on the banks of a sacred river. In this way each of the Maha-rajahs of Tipperah has a spire (fig. 4), erected over a bone of his predecessor, on the banks of the sacred Teeta River. A favourite wife, particularly if she had become a Sutte, had often a *mut* erected over some of the ashes of the body. In these cases the spires were usually smaller than those over the husband. These *mut*s often contain an image of Siva or Kalee; others contain a *linga* (priapus), or a flat stone supporting a central pillar, representing the regenerator Siva, or Nature under the male and female symbols. These buildings are varied according to the means and the taste of the individual. In general, they consist of one, but in other cases, of many spires.

4. *Circles of Stones*. The circles of stones appear to have formed sacred spots, intended for other purposes besides that of being depositories for the remains of the dead. Of these, examples were found in the same retired places as the cromlechs in Central India. They are often of the same size as in this country, and, like them, are formed of boulders. One, of which a drawing is now before me, forms a circle of 32 feet; another of 26 feet; and a third is 30 by 27½ feet. As the arts improved in

Europe, the light of Christianity was also introduced, and the erection of these structures was abandoned. But in India, where idolatry held its ground, the arts, as they advanced, were employed in their enlargement and embellishment. The objects and edifices of superstitious veneration were increased in size, until they attained the scale which we see exemplified in the remains of the vast structure of *Depaldinna*, the Hill, or Mound of Light, near Amrawatty, in Central India. There we see immense excavations, surrounded by concentric circles, formed of vast numbers of stones, beautifully sculptured with mythological figures, and inscriptions in two or three different idioms of the Sanscrit language. The outer circle of this gigantic structure is 160 feet in diameter. In the neighbourhood are numerous remains of kist-vaens, circles, barrows, &c.

Some years ago I examined two interesting structures or temples, which had all the essential features of the stone circle, and of the ancient temples of Central India. They are situated near the banks of the sacred Bargaretta, or Hooghly River, at Culna, and belong to the Maha-Rajah of Burdwan. In this temple there are two concentric circles of stones in marble, formed into 108 lingas, or representations of the male and female energy of the world, with a temple over each. The external circle is formed of alternate white and black marble pillars; the internal circle entirely of white marble. The outer circle had its entrances north and south, and the inner east and west, much in the same manner as in the large temple of Depaldinna, in Central India; and while in the centre of this there was a tank, the temple in Bengal, where worship is regularly celebrated, has a well of water, the *yonis*, or symbol of Parvati, the female energy. A second circle of temples in the neighbourhood appeared to be merely a modification of the other.

This general identity of the ancient monuments of southern and western Europe with those of Hindostan, is further proved by the physical conformation of the races who inhabit these distant countries, by the similarity of many of their manners, customs,* and observances;† and by the decided and extensive affinities of the Celtic and other languages of western Europe with the Sanscrit,‡ which afford as strong evidence as we can be expected to obtain, of a connection so remote between races so widely separated. Indeed, the names of mountains, rivers, and other great natural features of the south and west of Europe, bear evidence of its having been in possession of a Celtic race anterior to the earliest date of authentic history; and this early connection indicates a line of inquiry, by following which much of the obscurity resting over the earliest monuments and history of western Europe may be cleared away.

As these Asiatic races emerged from their oriental seat, and settled on the shores of Europe at different stages of advancement in civilisation, we must expect differences in the idioms of their language, in their monuments,

* Primeval Antiquities of Denmark, p. 132 *et seq.*

† PLINY, Nat. Hist., xxv. 1.

‡ PRICHARD'S Celtic Nations, pp. 20-22.

and in certain of their observances; which will be better understood by adding a few remarks on the Asiatic people who are believed to have erected these monuments, and on their religious opinions, in explanation of some of the symbols or hieroglyphics which are found upon the ancient obelisks of Scotland.*

A reformer of the Sabaism, and Brahminical fire-worship of the ancient Asiatic races, gave rise to the present form of the Buddhist religion, in the north of India, in the sixth century before the Christian era. This religion inculcated a belief in a trinity, in the perfectibility of our nature, in the transmigration of souls, in the veneration for serpents, for certain trees, &c.; and such was the sanctity and zeal of the priests, and the benevolence of the doctrines they inculcated, that it rapidly spread over Hindostan. Some time after the invasion of India by Alexander the Great (B.C. 247), Asoka was the great Buddhist monarch of that country, who probably propagated the new doctrines by recording edicts upon rocks, and pillars (lâts), in different parts of Hindostan.† As the language was the vernacular dialect of the period, it varied according to the part of the country it was intended for; and it was only by the genius of the late JAMES PRINSEP that it was deciphered.‡ These most interesting monuments of antiquity are found in distant parts of India, and were most probably transcribed from copies obtained from the king, and such changes were made as were required for the better understanding of the people for whom they were intended. They inculcate the following benevolent precepts: honour to parents and kindred; never-tiring charity; respect and liberality for good men, and spiritual guides; temperance and moderation in every word and action; and the utmost humanity to man and the inferior animals. These precepts were not only to be inculcated in their own country, but ministers of religion, or missionaries, were appointed “to spread them, and to intermingle themselves among all unbelievers, to overwhelm them with the inundation of religion, and with the abundance of the sacred doctrine.”—(5th Table.) They were directed to effect conversions in the dominions of Alexander (satrap of Persia), Antigonus (sovereign of Phrygia and Lycia), Magas (the son-in-law of Ptolemy Philadelphus), Ptolemy (either the first or all of the four first princes of Egypt), and Antiochus (the Great). These names were probably given, as Professor Wilson supposes, from their notoriety in India, as they were not contemporaries.§ The missionaries were to find their way into the uttermost limits of barbarous countries, for the benefit and pleasure of all, and for reducing the passions of the faithful, and for the regeneration of those bound in the fetters of sin; “intermingling

* See the beautiful drawings of the ancient sculptured stones of Angus by J. CHALMERS, Esq., and the more recent volume on those of Scotland by the Spalding Club.

† On the Kapur di Giri, the Girnar rock Gujerat, and on the Dhale rock of Cuttack; on the Pillars (lâts) of Delhi, Allahabad, &c. See *Journal of Asiatic Society, Calcutta*, vol. vii., pp. 156 and 219.

‡ See *Asiatic Journal, Bengal*, vol. vii., pp. 150 and 219.

§ *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. xii., p. 246.

equally among the dreaded and the respected, both in the very metropolis of religion (Pataliputa); and in foreign places," to teach them "righteousness, which passeth knowledge."

The Buddhists were then a powerful and a rich community; and in the fifth century, the Chinese traveller Fa Hean* found Buddhism the prevailing religion of India. But in the middle of the seventh century, another Chinese traveller (Hwan Thsang) found that the zealous Buddhists had degenerated into rich, selfish, and idle monks. This engendered a feeling of dislike and jealousy among the people, and as they rejected the sacred books of the Hindus, and many of their cherished dogmas, the Brahmins persecuted them with relentless fury, and after ages of sanguinary wars, they were expelled from India. The vanquished Buddhists fled to Ceylon, and other neighbouring countries; and the feeble remnant in Hindostan live in small communities, abstain from carnal pleasure, and pass a monotonous existence in the routine of a monastic life, without any of that fervid enthusiasm for which their predecessors were once so distinguished. But although so few remain in the original seat of the religion, so great was their success in other countries, that there are now upwards of three hundred millions of Asiatics who profess the Buddhist religion.

One cause of the almost total extinction of Buddhism in India was, that it required its followers to lead a life of charity, abstinence, and privation, with a long course of prayer, penance, and devout abstraction, in order to work out their escape from the circle of existence; or to attain what they considered the state of beatitude in another world. This produced constant disputes and divisions, which, with their wandering habits, the frequent and cruel persecutions, and the precepts of their religion, induced them to visit distant countries, to gain followers to their peculiar opinions, which they modified to suit the people they visited. At this period some intercourse was still maintained between the cognate, but widely separated races; and the new doctrines were carried westward by missionaries, who, finding some of the races they visited unprovided with a written language, had recourse to symbols, already used in the East, to express their fundamental doctrines. These were modified to suit the particular circumstances of the people they resided among. The Asiatics were idolaters from an early period, and have continued so; and from their power and riches, and a certain advancement in the arts, they constructed magnificent temples, and idols of Buddha; while they relied on symbols among the rude tribes of Britain. Such differences in the method of propagating the religion must be expected, and seem to strengthen the argument in favour of their identity; and an enumeration of the remains of the interesting race in India, will afford useful indications of their opinions. These are—

1. Magnificent *Cave Temples*, excavated out of the solid rock. Some of these are beautifully decorated with paintings and sculptures.

* See the admirable translation, and most interesting notes, by J. W. LAIDLAY, Esq. Calcutta, 1848.

2. *Lâts*, or sandstone obelisks, containing inscriptions of royal edicts regarding ceremonial observances, &c.

3. *Large Monasteries*. And,

4. *Topes*, or religious edifices. These are in the form of massive hemispherical domes, and are another name for regular built *Cairns*, signifying a solid mound or tumulus. These Topes are either funereal, memorial, or are dedicated to the deity.

a. The *Funereal Topes*, or *Cairns*, are the receptacles of the ashes and bones of saints, and are built in honour of mortal Buddhas. They are of all ages, and made of different materials; as they were the common form of tombs, even before the advent of the most celebrated mortal Buddha (the Sakya Muni), who died B.C. 543.

b. Topes were built as *Memorials*, in celebrated places.

c. *Dedicatory Topes* were intended as offerings to the Deity, the supreme invisible God. These religious edifices contained no deposits, and were typified on the outside by a pair of eyes on each of the four sides either of the base or crown of the edifice,* to indicate the all-seeing, all-powerful, divine spirit, who is light, and is supposed to occupy, in a special manner, the interior.†

The great doctrine of the Buddhist religion consists in a triad, "*tri-ratna*," or three jewels, or three precious ones; that is, *Buddha*, spirit or God, *Dharma*, the law, and *Sangha*, the Buddhist community or brotherhood. This was the genuine sense of the words, to certain of the initiated; but a more clear and intelligible explanation was, that *Buddha* signified the spiritual, or the divine intellectual essence of the world, or the efficient underived cause of all; *Dharma*, the material essence of the world, the plastic, underived cause; and *Sangha*, which was derived from and composed of the two others. This third member is, therefore, the collective energy of spirit and matter in the state of action; or "the embryotic creation, the type and sum of all specific forms, spontaneously evolved from the union of Buddha and Dharma." ‡ This is merely a modification of the opinion of so many of the ancient nations, and nearly all the Asiatic races of the present day. They believe in a spiritual deity and a fruitful earth; in a male and female principle, in mind and matter; Osiris and Isis; in Venus Genetrix and Phallos; Pater Æther and Mater Terra; Lingam and Yoni, Brahma and Sarsaswete, and other gods and their saktas or wives; Yang and Yin (Chinese), &c.

The Buddhist missionaries found it necessary to employ symbols in Asia and in the countries they visited, in order to direct and fix the attention of rude races to the spiritual objects of their worship. Those symbols of the deity were in Asia—

1. *Spirit* (Buddha), represented by a circle or wheel, typical of the passage of the soul through the circle of existence.

* See Plate, Fig. 10, CUNNINGHAM'S Topes of Bhilsa, p. 8.

† Journal of the Asiatic Society, Bengal, vol. v., p. 81.

‡ Ibid., vol. v., p. 37.

2. *Inorganic Matter* (Dharma) was represented by a circle, or by a monogram formed of the initial letters of the names of the elements of matter.

3. Of *Organized Matter* (Sangha), by a third circle, which, when decorated, was often formed of the combination of the symbols of Spirit and Matter; or on coins by the representation of an organized body.*

The symbols of the Buddhist triad, when employed in India, are often of elegant forms, and gracefully decorated; and have undergone various modifications upon coins and sculptures, in different ages and countries, according to the fancy of the individual, and the particular Buddha, or saint, they worshipped. Buddha is represented by various-shaped wheels, Dharma by changes in the beautiful monogram, and Sangha by a combination of the two others, by organized bodies, or by other varied and graceful ornaments, to reach the understanding of those for whom they were intended. As the community increased in power and riches, they erected magnificent temples, or excavated them out of the "living rock," as the proper offering to the deity; amidst a profusion of ornaments and magnificence, idols, or dedicatory Topes (*chaitya*), were the objects of worship.

When the enthusiastic Buddhist missionaries reached the extreme west, they found themselves among a rude race, at enmity with their neighbours, and menaced by the great Roman power, which had subjugated their more powerful southern neighbours. These missionaries, with the Druids, many of whom had fled from the cruel persecutions of the Romans, would unite the different tribes to oppose their cruel invaders, and inculcate their religious doctrines. This could only be done by symbols, as they had no written language; and upon the erect stones, already probably venerated, they traced figures to explain their trinity, the great dogma of their religion. As their influence extended, other obelisks were erected, and adorned with devices to stimulate the pride of the Caledonians, while they awakened their fears, and kindled their zeal, for their religious opinions; and they were executed in a style which proved their intelligence, and their knowledge of the arts which they had brought from the east.

In examining these symbols, we must expect that it is in the simplest form we shall find the identity between the obelisks in Asia and those of this country. Upon Buddhist coins, the triad is represented as triple hemispheres, most probably intended for circles: In the great temples of Ellora, and several other Buddhist caves, Colonel SYKES found these circles traced in the same order as on the coins; two forming the basement, and one the apex (fig. 1).† This is the symbolical representation of the Buddhist triad; which is still more accurately traced on the Kinnellar standing-stone, in Aberdeenshire, which has the three

* On the sculptured stones of Scotland it is represented by some embryotic form of animal or vegetable life, or an imperfect circle.

† See annexed plate (No. IV.), in which *figures* designate the oriental symbols, and *letters* those on the engraved stones of Scotland. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. vi., p. 451.

circles placed in the same order as in the temples in Hindostan (fig. *a*); and to mark still more intelligibly the trinity in unity, they are surrounded by another circle. This is the simplest form of the representation of the trinity in unity; and the "crescentic ornament" underneath the circles, in the Kinnellar stone, proves its identity with the other sculptured stones of Scotland.* The most frequent form, however, of the trinity on these stones, is two circles, symbols of spirit and matter, united by a belt, and crossed by a bar, to the extremities of which two sceptres were joined (fig. *d*), to indicate the supreme power, according to the Buddhist creed, the co-ordinate, and all-originating principle. This formed what has been called the "spectacled ornament" upon the stones of Scotland; while the third member of the trinity, organized matter (Sangha), was represented near the others, in the form of a crescent. Sometimes this third member is crossed by sceptres, to indicate the sovereignty of the laws which organic matter follows.

This interpretation of the "spectacled ornament" is further proved by the frequent appearance of an eye at the angles where the cross-bar joins the sceptres; which, like the eyes in the Buddhist temples dedicated to the deity, typify the spiritual intelligence which rules the universe. I may refer to the smaller Aberlemno stone, as a good example of these eyes, as they appear on the standing-stones of this country (fig. 10, *a*; and *ka*).

But neither the circles (fig. 1.), nor the crescent (fig. *A, a*), afforded a sufficiently clear idea of organized matter, the third member of the trinity, which they were intended to represent; and with that freedom which the Buddhist artists were allowed, and took advantage of, they explained their meaning more intelligibly by representing organized matter, in Scotland, as an embryo, or some rude representation of animal life.† Thus, on the Dunnichen stone, organized matter is represented as a two-headed figure of a flower (*c*) gracefully bent towards the symbol of God, from whence it was supposed to receive its spiritual emanation; on the silver ornament found at Norrie's Law, a dog-like embryo (*f*), and on the Kintore stone, the embryo of an elephant (*e*) is thus receiving the spiritual influence. The same idea is expressed in the same way, on Buddhist coins; as is represented on the annexed plate, where figs. 5 and 6 represent the union of the two members of the trinity, spirit and matter (α, β), with an embryo elephant or monster below (5); while organized matter was represented as a hand, an embryo (7), a serpent

* As the Hindus as well as the Buddhists suppose that the spiritual essence envelopes the earth, I was curious to see if there was any difference in the size of the circles. I found the figures on the Kinnellar stone were sufficiently distinct to enable me to do so; and on carefully measuring the three circles, I found that the upper circle, and that on the right-hand side, were of the same diameter, while that on the left-hand was half an inch larger. I therefore consider that this circle represented Buddha, or spirit.

† According to this opinion, man is the union (Sangha) of matter (Dharma), with the soul or divine intelligence (Buddha).

(7'), a bull (8), &c., on other coins. This proves their identity with the symbols on the stones in Scotland.

Various other examples and modifications might be stated, but I shall now only mention the interesting and solitary example of such symbols upon a rock in Galloway. In this example, the sculptured "spectacle ornament," is near the top of the rock, with organized matter in the form of a horn, having an ornamented large extremity or mouth, turned to the symbol of the deity, and from what might be considered as its navel, two diverging lines proceed and terminate in a circle, or embryo head (fig. *m*); whilst lower down another (β), more formed and detached, is intended as a human head, with two feelers or antennæ, to communicate with the external world; by which means, the embryo was most probably fancied to be developed to its full size and figure.

The serpent is represented on several of the engraved stones of Scotland, as the symbol of the deity, or spirit; and this bore allusion to objects of a divine or intellectual nature.* It was therefore represented as transfixing by a cross-bar, uniting the extremities of two sceptres (fig. *n*); as on the stone of Belutheron and of Meigle, over which an embryo elephant is the representation of crude organized matter; which, like those near the circles, it was supposed to typify.

In some cases the trinity is represented in the form of a horse-shoe, with organized matter in the form of a fowl (fig. *x*).

A third variety of the symbol of the spiritual deity is a sculptured square, or oblong fork-like figure; a modification of the cross, or Buddhist sacred labyrinth. This is the complicated form of the Buddhist cross (fig. 9), which forms a curious subject of inquiry, as it is found on ancient Phœnician pottery, and on Gaza Coins; and is considered to be the Phœnician letter Tau (fig. β), the symbol of divine life.† It is also found on Christian monuments,‡ and on the dress of a gravedigger in the catacombs of Rome.§ In Scotland this cross occurs in the fourth line of the Newton stone (fig. *y*). Such examples of squares, or modifications of the Buddhist cross, are to be found on the Maiden stone, and on the Abernethy and other stones (fig. *o, p*).

On further examining these interesting sculptured stones of this country, we find other symbols of the faith of the Buddhists. The veneration which they had for certain trees affords a striking similarity, and appears to have given origin to their

* *Physici vero serpentem spiritualissimum animal esse dicunt; itaque res divinas, per serpentis naturam notabant.*—Eusebius, *Prep. Evang.*, liii., c. 3.

† Raoul-Rochette, *Mem. de l'Academie Royal des Ins. et Belles Lettres*, tom. xvi., p. 312, et xvii., part 2, p. 329.

‡ *Loc. cit.*, p. 302. Boldetti *Cosservazioni*, pp. 87 and 350. Lupi. (*Epitaph S. Sever. Mart.*, p. 11); and on a Christian sarcophagus described by Allegranza (*Sacri Monumenti*, Milan, 1577), tab. iv. and vi.

§ Louis Perrets sur les *Catacombes de Rome*, vol. i., p. 30.

western name, Druid.* In the East several trees were considered sacred by different Buddhists, according as their particular saint was supposed to have been born, done penance, preached, and died, under the sacred shade of a particular tree: Such are the *Ficus indica*, *F. glomerata*, *F. religiosa*, *Mimosa serisha*, &c. This explains the variety of trees which appear on the Buddhist coins, according as the dynasty or family who struck the coin were followers or disciples of the Buddha or saint whose emblem they adopted. The secluded spots, and the size of the tree, seemed to have decided the selection; while in Europe the oak was chosen for the same obvious reasons; and the secrecy of the forests of these fine trees was well adapted for the performance of their mysterious rites. Figure 12 is an enlarged copy of a tree on a coin springing out of a Buddhist pot or rail; and figure *q* is a similar tree copied from the Eassie stone. The Farnell stone (fig. *r*) has the representation of a sacred tree, with two priests, probably performing religious worship, standing on the rail, and between two serpents shedding their divine influence over the holy place; very much in the same manner as devotees are seen worshipping at a holy tree (fig. 4) springing out of the sacred rail, and each branch surrounded by a spiritual halo.†

Besides lions (fig. *u*), camels (fig. *v*), serpents, and marked sacrificial bulls (fig. *s*), centaurs appear several times upon the erect stones of Scotland; and they cannot be supposed to be an original idea of the artists of these stones, but point to Greece, their supposed original country; and perhaps they were derived from the mysterious Pelasgians, the druidical worshippers of the oak. The centaur was typical of a barbarous devastator; and he is represented at the side of the cross with other monsters, as on the Glamis stone. On the Meigle and Aberlemno stones, the centaurs hold a battle-axe in each hand (fig. *t*),‡ and are represented as dragging trees after them, being typical, probably, of the destruction of the druidical groves by the Roman troops. These sacred trees appear to have been respected by the Caledonians after the introduction of Christianity, which explains their appearing in honourable positions on the same stones with the cross, as in the Eassie stone; while the centaur is represented, in the lower and most degraded part of the stone; and in the Aberlemno stone, a bar separates him from the chiefs above.

These observations would be imperfect without a few words on the nature, probable age, and uses of these interesting monuments; which are so numerous in the eastern coast of Scotland, so remarkable for the peculiar symbols they bear, and the elegant manner in which these are often executed, in an age when the inhabitants of the country, from all we know of them, were in a state of ignorance and

* The name in the Sanscrit language is *dru*, in the Greek *drus*, Welsh *deru*, Erse *dair*, a tree, or oak-tree.

† From a bas-relief in the Museum of the Hon. East India Company, London.

‡ The artist of Mr Chalmers's beautiful drawings has erroneously represented these as crosses.

rudeness. A few slight notices of their existence, are found in some of the ancient national authors, and various absurd legends, in explanation of the origin of the engraved stones, are all that remain of the remarkable history of these antiquities, which can now only be obtained from examining the figures on the stones themselves.

These sculptured stones of Scotland are large in size, selected with skill, and often brought from great distances. They were erected at convenient central situations, the sacred symbols were traced upon them, and they were consecrated for worship. So various were their decorations, and so modified their sacred symbols, that out of nearly two hundred that are supposed to exist, there are not two exactly the same. Such varieties prove that the artists were allowed a considerable liberty in these illustrations of their belief, so as to suit their own fancy, or render them more acceptable to the people for whom they were intended. We might suppose the individual who traced the symbols on the rock of Galloway (fig. *m*) to be a zealous missionary, who availed himself of a rock cropping out of the soil, to trace the sacred symbols of the Deity, with such additions as might make them more intelligible to the ignorant people, for whom they were intended; as we find "rich and zealous Buddhists in Thibet, of the present day, who maintain at their own expense companies of priestly sculptors, who travel, chisel and mallet in hand, over the country, engraving their sacred formula"* upon the rocks and stones. Such a practice, among the ancient Buddhists of this country, would explain the number of the standing-stones in the east of Scotland—not with inscriptions, for the people they were intended for were ignorant of letters, but with the sacred symbols of the Deity engraved upon them.

It was probably after the persecution of the Roman General, Suetonius (A.D. 59), and the destruction of the sacred groves of Mona, and other places, that the Druids joined their brethren among the mountains of Scotland, when their superior intelligence, and hatred of the invaders, united the Caledonians in offering that obstinate resistance, and consolidating that Pictish kingdom, on the east coast of Scotland and north of the Firth of Forth, which the bravery and discipline of the Roman legions were never able to conquer. The extent and nature of the religious monuments prove that the Buddhists had enthusiastic followers; and as the severity of the climate, and proximity of their enemies, prevented their forming groves, they changed the manner of conveying instruction, in conformity with new opinions from the East, so as to render it more simple and less mysterious. This was accomplished by erecting standing-stones, which bore the symbols of the objects of their worship, sometimes by themselves, and at other places in connection with circles of stones; as was the case with the Kinnellar stone, the stones

* Om mani padme houn,—(Oh! the precious lotus, Amen).—Oh! may I obtain perfection, and be absorbed into Buddha, Amen. See Travels in Tartary, Tibet, and China, vol. i., p. 194. KLAPROTH, Journ. Asiat., Second Series, vol. vii., p. 188.

of Kintore, of the wood of Crechie, and, most probably, of many others which have been destroyed. It is probable, therefore, that the erect stones, with the sacred pagan symbols of the Deity, were prepared during the first century.

At an early period, a remarkable change occurred in the religious opinions of the Caledonians. They became believers in Christianity. This we know from the crosses they erected still retaining peculiar ornaments, and pagan symbols; proving that they had not entirely rejected their ancient opinions; as druidical monuments were supposed to be purified from the contamination of heathenism, by being carved with the figure, or altered in the shape of the cross. This change of faith must have been facilitated by the Buddhist doctrine of the Trinity, and the liberality of their sentiments regarding other religious creeds, which is still so marked a peculiarity in Buddhist countries. "We find," writes M. Huc, "many of these Buddhist priests (lamas) attach the utmost importance to the study and knowledge of *truth*; and we find the same men coming, again and again, to seek instruction from us in our holy religion."* It appears to be this same liberality of sentiment which is now opening a way to the Christianizing of the great Chinese Empire, which produced a corresponding effect in the conversion of the Caledonians.

Such conversions must have been made at an early age, as TERTULLIAN, who wrote his celebrated Treatise against the Jews (A.D. 209), affirms, as a known truth, that "those parts of Britain where the Romans had no access were subjected to Christ," or had become Christians.† Those early converts could not communicate with their neighbours, in consequence of the constant warfare with the Romans and other tribes which were not able to conquer the great Pictish kingdom north of the Forth. Even the Mæataæ, or Midland Britons, were still idolaters when the Caledonians were Christians, which explains why the Scottish deputies, in the famous debate regarding the independence of their kingdom before Pope Boniface VIII., declared that the Christian missionaries, who converted the Caledonians in the primitive ages, came directly from the east;‡ and the account by BEDE of the dispute between Bishop COLMAN and WILFORD.§ When the Bishop alleged the example of St John the Evangelist, with all the churches over which he presided, for adhering to the Jewish custom of keeping Easter, WILFORD declared that wherever the Church of Christ is spread abroad the western form was kept, "except only these and their accomplices in obscurity; I mean," said he, "the Picts and the Britons, who foolishly, in these two remote islands of the world, and only a part even of them, oppose all the rest of the universe."|| Their missionaries seem to have proceeded directly from one of the then congregations of Asia Minor, which were most probably in-

* Travels in Tartary, Tibet, and China, vol. i., p. 65.

† Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca Christo vero subdida. Contra Judæos, c. vii.

‡ Innes' Critical Essay, p. 620, and Civil and Eccl. Hist., p. 14.

§ A.D. 662.

|| BEDE, Eccl. Hist., b. iii., ch. 25.

timately connected with Spain, which explains St Paul's remark in his Epistle to the Romans,* "whensoever I take my journey to Spain I will come to you" (chap. xv. ver. 24); "and I will come to you into Spain" (ver. 28). This proves that congregations of Christians existed in Spain in the first century, from whence, most probably, the spirit of conversion early found its way to Britain. It is in vain to conjecture by what means the Christian missionaries reached the northern part of Scotland. The enthusiasm of these primitive Christians was quite sufficient to overcome these obstacles; and the liberal Buddhists, open to reason, and eager for the acquisition of truth, would be easily converted, and become enthusiastic followers of the new faith. But, retaining their liberality of sentiment, they did not immediately reject the symbols of the Deity which their more ignorant followers held in veneration; and we may still mark the changes which their feelings underwent by those on the engraved stones. In all those erected after this period, the pagan symbols were subservient to the Cross, and this became more and more marked, until the symbols at length disappeared from the emblem of the Christian faith.

According to that able antiquary, Dr D. WILSON, "the interlaced patterns, and figures of dragons, serpents, and nondescript monsters, bearing a close and unmistakable resemblance to the decorations of some of the most ancient Irish manuscripts, and several of the beautiful initials from the Book of Kells, an Irish MS. of the sixth century, as engraved in Mr WESTWOOD'S *Palæographia*, bear a close resemblance to the style of ornament of these sculptures; while the interlaced network on the case of the shield of St Mairdo, which Dr PETRIE conceives cannot be later than the eighth century, though less distinctly characteristic, and by no means peculiar to Ireland, very nearly corresponds in its details to the ornamentation frequently introduced on the Scottish monuments." †

There is much difficulty in determining on the age in which these crosses were erected, as we have no direct evidence on the subject. From the peculiarity of their form, of their decorations, and locality, they must have been prepared before the dissolution of the great Pictish kingdom in the ninth century; and the adoration of the cross appears to have been practised in the ancient churches, for which reason the heathen, particularly Julian, reproached the primitive Christians with this species of idolatry. This may be traced to a misapprehension of the expressions of the apostles and fathers "taking up the cross and following Christ—of enduring the cross—suffering persecutions for the cross—should not glory save in the cross." The custom of making the sign of the cross may be traced to the third, but most probably was used at a much earlier period. Constantine the Great first used the cross, or token under which he fought and conquered, and is supposed to have first erected crosses in public places. Others believe that it was not until the Empress Helena found the true cross that it became an object of

* A.D. 60.

† See his *Archæology and Pre-historic Annals of Scotland*, p. 497.

adoration. This was A.D. 326, in the twenty-first year of the reign of her son Constantine, the thirteenth of the Pontificate of St Silvester, and the first after the Council of Nice. Previous to a battle or great enterprise, an anticipatory offering to heaven was presented by the erection of a cross, as we find OSWALD did previous to the battle he fought with CADWALLO in the seventh century. In this case it was a cross of wood, OSWALD holding it till it was fixed in the earth, while his soldiers kneeled around.* It was in the eighth century that, in compliance with the teaching of JOHN OF DAMASCUS, the crucifix was considered the principal object of worship, so that it is probable those stone crosses in the north of Scotland were erected before this period; and, from their being so different in their form and ornament from those of Iona, they were probably erected by a distinct set of missionaries from the east, at central situations, for affording instruction, by the piety or remorse of individuals. From a consideration of all the circumstances known regarding them, I am inclined to suppose that these peculiar engraved stones of the Pictish kingdom, with crosses, were erected in that native transition period, from the fourth to the eighth century, when Pagan and Christian relics were so curiously mingled.

The large obelisk of Meigle (fig. *m*) may be instanced as an example of a beautiful cross which occupies the upper part of the face, with monsters, and unseemly objects on the lower and outer compartments. On the back is the armed centaur dragging away the sacred tree, with the figures of monsters on the lower parts; above which is the representation of some local tradition, with chiefs on horseback, accompanied with dogs, to indicate the state and rank of the individuals, which they were intended to represent. Upon the St Orleans stone, a beautiful cross (fig. *y*), turned to the east, occupies the face, while the pagan symbols are on the upper part of the back of the stone; whereas on the Fordoun stone, they are at the bottom of the cross, without the crescentic ornament, proving the discredit into which the emblems had fallen. This is still more marked in the obelisk of Golspie, near Dunrobin, where the face represents a graceful and chastely-ornamented cross, and the back a curious collection of pagan emblems (see Drawing, by the Spalding Club). At the top, Providence is represented as hovering over organized matter in the form of an embryo elephant. Under this is a man armed with an uplifted battle-axe, threatening an animal marked for a bloody sacrifice, as is still done in India. In his left hand he holds an open knife over a fish—another emblem; under which is the pyramidal form of organized matter, the third member of the trinity, and the usual crescentic sceptred ornament, which he is in the act of kicking away from their position over the “spectacled ornament,” now in the lowest and most degraded part of the stone, and without the sceptres, the emblems of sovereignty. At the bottom of the stone is a nondescript animal, upon the tail of which the armed man rests.

* BEDE, Eccl. Hist., iii., 2.

It is probable that soon after the erection of this obelisk the heathen emblems disappeared from the stones as no longer respected, and may have given place to the simple cross, one of which is built into the wall of the churchyard of Meigle, with no pagan symbols or grotesque additions (fig. *z*). These sculptured crosses were erected on the side of highways, and in central and convenient situations. As Christianity extended we find St Columba erected them, at a later period, both in stone and wood, in the Christianized part of the island, where the priest afforded instruction to the people, and offered up prayers, before there were churches.* This explains the old Gaelic word "clachan," which signified then the stone, and not, as now, the church.

The great Pictish kingdom north of the Firth of Forth, in which these ancient obelisks are found in such numbers, remained independent till the middle of the ninth century; but from there not being a succession of missionaries, and no provision made to enlighten the Caledonians, they declined in religious knowledge; so that when COLUMBA visited that country in the sixth century in order to convert them, he found their dialect so peculiar that he was obliged to employ an interpreter.† This explains why the names of so many old places in that part of the country, and of the Pictish kings, are neither Irish nor Gaelic. It also explains certain peculiarities in the forms of the cross they used as compared with those of Ireland and Iona.

Were it considered necessary, other facts might be added in proof that in ancient times the same pagan opinions existed in this country as in India, and were supplanted by the Christian faith from the east, to which religion and civilization are again flowing back from the west.

These ancient "standing stones" and beautiful crosses of Scotland have, until lately, been totally neglected, and many owe their preservation to their having been buried by accident or design. In other cases I found they had been, from ignorance, designedly mutilated, or, through carelessness, had been allowed to be destroyed; and a still larger proportion had been removed from their original position, and placed in exposed situations, without any protection. The consequence is that the wet insinuates itself into the interstices, especially of the red sandstone, and in the process of freezing and thawing, the fissures are increased, and the surface of the stone crumbles away. I may instance the large and beautiful cross of Meigle, and that at Golspie, as examples; and, unless measures are speedily taken, they will soon be destroyed by the influence of the weather. Were the cracks filled up with Roman cement, and the whole stone, when dry, saturated with boiled oil, it would arrest the destruction of these most interesting monuments of antiquity.

* Innes' Eccl. Hist. of Scotland, p. 212.

† This is expressly stated in more than one place by his biographer ADOMNAN.

Explanation of PLATE IV.

The Eastern symbols are marked by numbers, and the Western, or those of Scotland, by letters.

Figs. 1 and 2 represent the Trinity; fig. 1 occurring in the great Buddhist temples of India (SYKES), and fig. 2 on the Topes of Bhilsa (CUNNINGHAM).

These are the same as the Trinity in unity, fig. *a*, on the Kinnellar standing-stone in Aberdeenshire, and of *x* on the Dingwall stone.

Figs. 3 and 4 represent the members of the Trinity separate; α , β , γ , representing spirit (Buddha), inorganic matter (Dharma), and organized matter (Sangha).

The same is repeated in figs. *b* and *c*, on the stones of Scotland, in a form less decorated.

Figs. 5 and 6 are two of the many varieties of the two members of the Trinity, Buddha and Dharma, as represented on coins;* and Sangha, or organized matter, as an animal, generally not completely formed—as an embryo elephant, a hand, an embryo (7), a serpent (7'), a bull (8), &c.

These symbols are very slightly changed in the stones of Scotland. The two members of the Trinity are represented as circles, united by a belt, which is crossed by a bar uniting two sceptres, the ensigns of sovereignty; and the third member, organized matter, is represented as an embryo elephant, a flower (*e*), an embryo dog (*f*), a serpent (*g*), a fish (*h*), a bird (*x*).

Fig. *m* is the only example of the Trinity traced on a rock of Galloway. In this case, organized matter is in the form of a horn, from the navel of which embryo heads proceed. When detached, they apparently communicate with the external world by means of organ-like insect antennæ.

Fig. *n* represents a serpent, transfixed by a bar united to two sceptres, with an embryo elephant, receiving its influence from the symbol of the Deity.

Fig. 9 is the Buddhist cross.

l is the same cross, as it appears upon the ancient Phœnician pottery and coins ($\alpha \alpha \alpha \alpha$), is considered to be the symbol of divine life, and to be the Phœnician letter *Tau* (β). This symbol appears on the fourth line of the Newton stone inscription (γ).

Fig. 11 is a more complicated form of the Buddhist cross, and is called the Buddhist labyrinth—the symbol of providence; of which *p* is a modification, as it appears on the stones of Scotland.

Fig. *o* is another variety of the symbol of Providence. There are several others.

Fig. 10 is the representation of a Buddhist temple, dedicated to the Deity; which is indicated by the two eyes (*a*).

The same is represented on the stones of Scotland by two eyes (fig. *k a*), where the bar crossing the belt, unites the two members of the Trinity, and joins the two sceptres: In this the resemblance is complete.

Fig. 12. The sacred Buddhist tree, represented as rising out of a pot; which resembles that (*q*) on the Eassie stone of Scotland.

Fig. 13. The sacred Buddhist tree, surrounded by a sacred halo, with two persons worshipping.

The same sacred tree is upon the Farnell stone, Scotland (fig. *r*), with a sacred serpent on each side, and two figures standing on the pot.

Fig. *s* represents the sacred bull on the Eassie stone, marked like those still found in India.

Fig. *t*. The centaur on the Meigle stone, armed with two battle-axes, and dragging a sacred tree after him.

Figs. *u* and *v*. The figures of a lion, and a stooping camel, on one of the Meigle stones.

Figs. *w*, *y*, *z*. Specimens of crosses as they appear upon the ancient sculptured stones of Scotland.

* See Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal, particularly vol. vii., plate 61.

